2014 turned out to be a very successful year for Georgian cinema.

We must start with the news that Zaza Urushadze was a nominee at the Golden Globes and for Oscar with his film "Tangerines", and two Georgian films (funded by the National Film Center): "Corn Island" (produced by Georgia) and "Tangerines" (produced by Estonia/Georgia) got onto the Academy Award short list.

2014 began with Eldar Shenegalia's film "Blue Mountains, or the Unbelievable Story" participating in the Cannes Classic section at the Cannes Festival, where it was a great success. Dea Kulembegashvili's minimalistic film "Invisible Spaces" also participated in the Cannes short film section.

Tinatin Qajrishvili's film "Brides" and Levan Koghuashvili's "Blind Dates" participated in the Berlinale Forum and Panorama and together they won a total of around 30 international festival prizes. Giorgi Ovashvili's film "Corn Island" won the Karlovy Vary Crystal Globe Award and was a triumph at the festival.

A large-scale retrospective of Georgian films "Discover Georgian Cinema" was organized in the New York Museum of Modern Arts (MoMA) and in Berkeley's Pacific Film Archive. About 50 Georgian films, beginning from the silent film era and ending with recent works, will eventually be screened.

The Busan International Film Festival focused on Georgian female directors and films by Georgian female directors covering the period 1930 to 2014 were shown. A bilingual Georgian-Korean book "The Strength of Georgian Women Directors" was also published.

Young director Mariam Khachvani's short film "Dinola" was a nominee of the European Film Academy.

This year, for the first time, we took part in the ceremony to confer the European Film Academy's Young Audience Award.

The festivals funded by us have long travelled beyond the borders of Georgia and earned international recognition and affection. These are the Tbilisi International Festival Prometheus, the Batumi International Auteur Film Festival, the Animated Film Festival Eco Topuzi, the Nikozi International Animated Film Festival in the small village of Nikozi bordered by Russian-occupied Ossetia, the very young (established for only two years) Sinedok International Documentary Film Festival, and the Amirani International Student Film Festival.

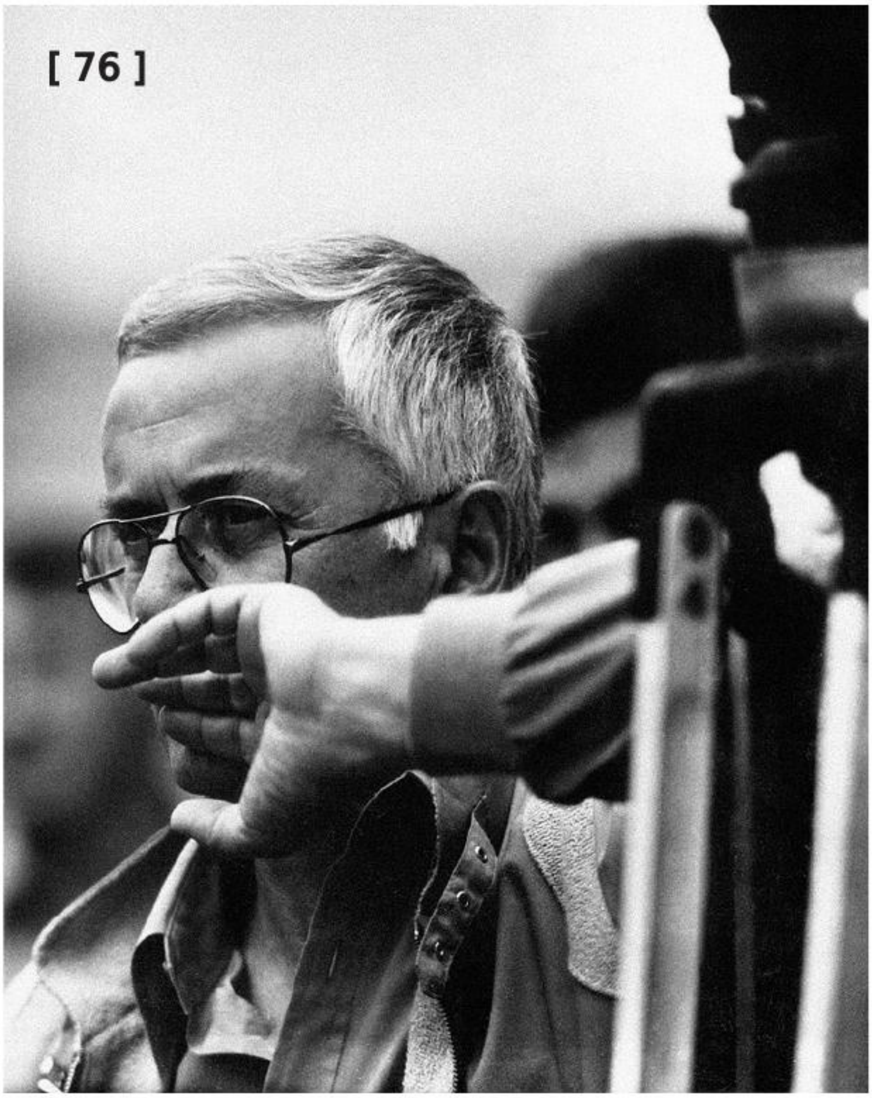
We also have to note the children's one-day festival Giffoni-Georgia, which was held for the first time in Georgia and quickly gained great affection "among the young people".

One of our favorite projects was "Film at School". We prepare film specialists to go out into the schools in the regions and show children great films after their lessons. Admission is free. Discussions are held after the screening. The schoolchildren discovered the world of great classic cinema and showed their desire to go deeper into this world.

We have many new plans for this year.

We wish you a fruitful New Year full of new ideas; may 2015 be a year of creative development and the achievement of great goals.

Nana Janelidze, Natia Kanteladze



filmprint

On the Cover:
Still from the feature film "Tangerines"

Publishing: Georgian National Film Center
Executive Manager: Natia Kanteladze
Chief Editors: Nana Janelidze, Natia Kanteladze
Art Director: Manana Arabuli
English language editor: David Tugwell
Translator: Nana Mzhavanadze
Photographers: Khatuna Khutsishvili, Tako Robakidze, Inna Margvelashvili.
Prepress manager: Alex Kakhniashvili
Authors: Nana Tutberidze, Anna Bakuradze, Inga Khalvashi, Davit Chikadze, Ninia Akhvlediani, Keti Machavariani, Neno Kavtaradze, Mari Kapanadze, Keti Baakashvili, Anuka Lomidze, Lela Ochiauri, Manana Lekborashvili, Magda Anikashvili, Nikoloz Gabedava, Maia Levanidze, Ketevan Trapaidze, Natia Tsitsriashvili, Elisabed Eristavi, Maka Kevlishvili, Soso Tughushi, Tinatin Chavleishvili, Natia Kopaleishvili, Rusudan Tikanadze, Nino Chichua, Nino Kevlishvili, Nato Sakuashvili, Kote Abdushelishvili, Nino Kavtaradze, Giorgi Ghvaladze, Irakli Makharadze, Tamar Poladashvili, Anna Dziapshipa, Nino Dzandzava.

Editorial office: 4, Zviad Gamsakhurdia Sanapiro Str, Tbilisi 0105 Georgia,
Tel.: +995 32 2 999200, www.info@gnfc.ge.
Web page: www. filmprint.ge
Printing: 24 Saati publishing house, Tel.: +995 32 2 409445

Printed with the support of
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND
MONUMENT PROTECTION OF GEORGIA

Berlinale 2014	6
Cannes International Film Festival	12
Batumi International Art House Film Fesrival	18
The 15th Tbilisi International Film Festival	22
Giorgi Ovashvili's Triumph at the Festival in Karlovy Vary	26
Sarajevo Film Festival	30
The 8th Tbilisi International Student Festival Amirani	32
Nikozi Festival	35
Acme Filmworks – Ron Diamond	37
From Cinema club to Festival – Marcel Jean	39
CineDoc – Tbilisi 2014	41
Interview with Archil Khetaguri	42
International Festival Golden Eye	44
Georgian Films Retrospection in Rome	46
Viral "Free Film Screenings" in Georgia	48

[116]

Production Outlook	51
"Corn Iseland" by Giorgi Ovashvili	52
"Brides" by Tinatin Kajrishvili	55
"Brother" by Teona Mgvdeladze, Thierry Grenade	57
"Ferris Wheel" by Uta Beria	59
"Paradjanov" by Olena Petisova, Senge Avedikian	61
"Ramaz Chkhikvadze" by Aleksandre Rekhviashvili	62
"Gambler" by Konstantine Esadze	64
"Parisian Dream" by Giorgi Varsimashvili	66
"Father" by Guram Bakradze	68
"fool Spead to West" by Stefan Tolz	70
Special Cinema	74
Auteur Cinema with National Colour – Tengiz Abuladze	76
Films that have not been made in Georgia	84
Otar Iosseliani	92

[70]

Georgian Films Retrospection in MoMA	98
"I'm little Georgian" – A breakthrough into a Closed-off Area	101
Interview with Levan Berdzenishvili	104
Interview with Vladimer Kacharava	107
"Ursus" By Otar Shamatava	109
Half a Century has Elapsed "Alaverdoba"	112
Dato Takaishvili's "Plague"	114
Arkadi Khintibidze	116
Special Focus	119
Interview with Roman Balaian	120
Interview with Rustam Ibragimbekov	123
Notes from Lectures by Marina Razbeshkina	125
Interview with Pavel Lozinski	128
Archives, Memory and Politics	130

"The Weather's Beautiful in Berlin and They Show Nice Films..."

In the newspaper Der Tagesspiegel the above text continued as followed: "is it not a real paradise?!". All of us have our own idea of heaven, but as for the films shown at the 64th International Film Festival, I would like to share my opinion.

Among the so-called "A" class film festivals, the Berlinale starts the cinematographic year and the Germans are very proud of this. Indeed, alongside Cannes and Venice, the Berlinale is among the top three film festivals in the world. However, I think that perhaps the Berlinale's rung on the ladder of film festivals has become rather loose and is in need of repair. Being a well-wisher and a visitor to the festival for the 22nd time gives me the right to be both objective and critical. When we are asked "Which film did you like most this year?" and we need to think about the answer and can hardly manage to remember even two films, it means that something is wrong.

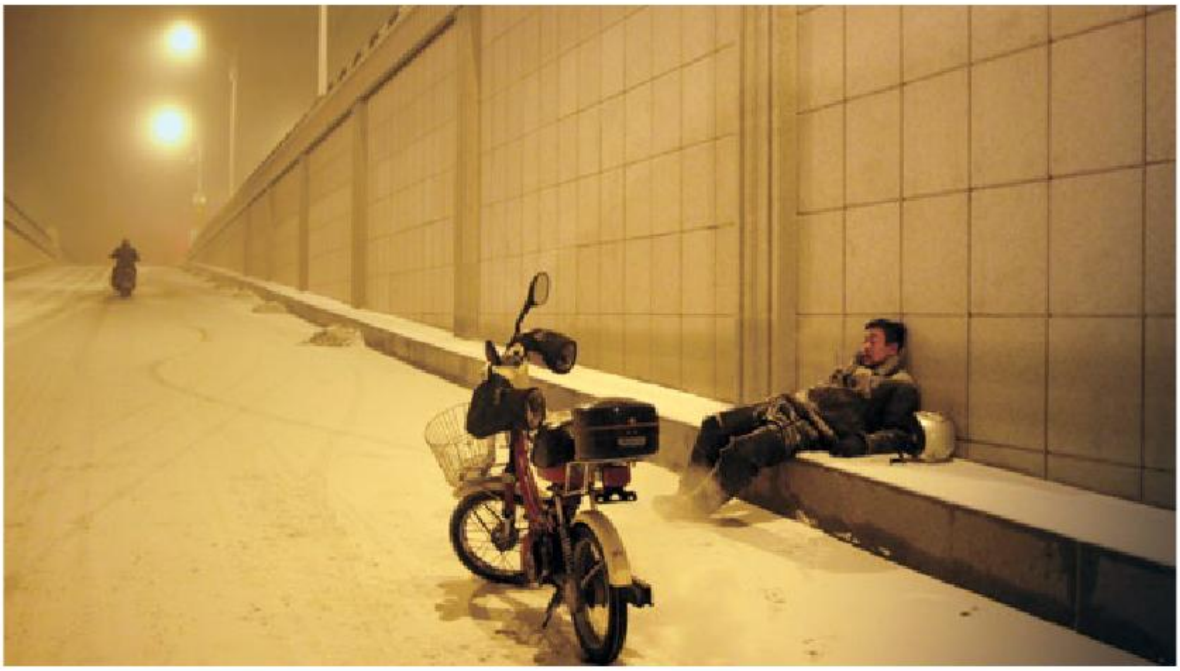
From this year's Berlinale contest program I truly remember only two films. "Stations of the Cross" by Dietrich Brüggemann and "Boyhood" by English film master Richard Linklater. (The film "Before Sunrise" by this director was awarded the Silver Bear at Berlinale 1995. This was followed up by a two-film continuation. Major roles in this trilogy of films are played by Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke.)

These two films, which became favourites for some of us film critics, were subsequently awarded prizes by the international jury (headed by American producer James Schamus), thus justifying our choice. Brother and sister duo Dietrich and Anna Brüggemann, screenwriters of the film "Station of the Cross", were awarded the Silver Bear as well as the prize of the ecumenical jury. The film introduces us to a family whose members are part of a Catholic sect. Fourteen-year-old Maria becomes a victim of her mother's moral-religious violence and she dies. The authors do not impose on us any moral-ethical viewpoints, but merely show that every human being is free in their choice at any age.

Richard Linklater was awarded the Silver Bear for best direction for the film "Boyhood", together with the prize of the Jury of the Readers of the Newspaper Berliner Morgenpost and the prize of the Guild of German Art House Cinemas. "Boyhood" is a film which must be shown at film festivals. We would call it "Life", wrote German film critics. We follow the life of the main character Mason for 12 years through his childhood. Richard Linklater started working on the film in 2001, shooting episodes over 12 years and reflecting how Mason and his sister, played by the director's daughter Lorelei, are growing up. The director "packaged" the documentary material very skillfully. Its dramaturgy is also very fine, with a lot of funny and dynamic dialogues. Richard Linklater was also the screenwriter. The parents are played by Patricia Arquette and Ethan Hawke. In the award ceremony Richard Linklater noted: "I shouldn't have been awarded the prize for best direction but for best artistic company!"

Maybe for the first time in the last 15 years, the Berlinale was opened by a film participating in the contest - "The Grand Budapest Hotel" by American director Wes Anderson. The film was awarded the Silver Bear, the jury's main prize. In this eccentric retro-comely, the excellent cast includes Ralph Fiennes, Tilda Swinton, Edward Norton, Jude Law, Murray Abraham and Adrien Brody.

I want to continue with the Lars Von Trier's film "Nymphomaniac", which did not participate in the contest but which everybody was looking forward to with great interest. Before the festival we knew that the scandalous but great Danish artist, 57-year old Lars Von Trier, had made a 5-hour film which the festival organizers refused to show because of its length. The director agreed to divide the film into two parts with



the first part to show in Berlin and the second -in Cannes. "Nymphomaniac" is a masterpiece by the great artist displaying irony and erotica which is bordering on pornography. Joe, the main character of the film played by 23-year old model and actor Stacy Martin, finds sex to be both physically and mentally crucial. The first part of the film is reminiscent of the film "Young and Beautiful" by François Ozon.

It is a big honour for world class film stars to work with Lars Von Trier. This time Uma Thurman and Christian Slater acted in one of his films for the first time and created absolutely different and interesting characters. We saw Charlotte Gainsbourg and Stellan Skarsgård once again (the latter was also in the Norwegian black comedy "The Idiots" and I was hoping he would be awarded the Silver Bear for the best male actor this year).

In the German press "Nymphomaniac" was viewed as being "crazy for sex". I have to say that scandal follows Lars Von Trier. First he went to the photo session wearing a T-shirt with the inscription: "Persona Non Grata" and "The Golden Palm" of the Cannes festival (this is the festival he was thrown out of). Following this, one of the actors in "Nymphomaniac" left a press conference for incomprehensible reasons. Shia LaBeouf said that he "wasn't going to answer questions" and in the evening he appeared on the red carpet in a smoking jacket and a paper bag over his head bearing the words: "I'm not popular any longer". Despite this, his shocking behavior was aimed at popularity. This is how "Nymphomaniac" finished its adventures in Berlin. Let us see what happens in Cannes in May.

Of course my special attention and feelings was connected with the Georgian films. Two of them participated in the most prestigious programs of Berlinale: "The Brides" by Tina Kajrishvili in the Panorama program, and "Blind Dates" by Levan Koghuashvili in Forum. In the Forum catalogue there was an important evaluation by the famous German film critic Christoph Terhechte: "Blind Dates continues the best traditions of Georgian cinema. The narrative style is relaxed and unhurried and not overly sentimental. This deep work is interesting for its feeling of space (architecture and landscape)". The applause after the premiere was an echo of these words. An interesting discussion followed the premiere of "The Brides". You can probably understand, how pleasurable it is to sit among foreign colleagues in a full cinema hall during the world premieres accompanied by the ovations of the audience.

"The Brides" won the Audience Prize and third place. It is widely held that world premieres under the Panorama and Forum umbrella are highlights of a film career. Producer Keti Kalandarishvili was invited to the young artists' section Berlinale Talent. The Berlinale film market ("Market") presented the film "The Brother", one of the directors being Teona Mghvdeladze-Grenade. Leaders in the film market work with a "magnifying glass" to assess and reassess the films. They never share and show their emotions and their thoughts, but the film "Tangerines" by Zaza Urushadze was picked out and recognized as a hit among the films presented. A number of countries bought the rights to show the film. In March it will start its voyage in San Francisco cinemas.

Thus, Georgian cinema is regaining its international position.

Traditionally it happens that every year there are specific unifying themes that emerge in the films presented Berlinale's main contest. This year there were two such main themes: "Children and the external world" ("Jack" by Edward Berger, "Stations of the Cross" by Dietrich Brüggemann, "Boyhood" by Richard Linklater, "Cry/Fly!" by Claudia Llosa) and "Sex" ("Nymphomaniac" by Lars Von Trier, "Beloved Sisters" by Dominik Graf).

This year 20 films participated in the Berlinale contest. Out of these, four were German and three Chinese, of which two won the festival prizes. Zeng Jian, the cameraman of "Blind Massage", was awarded the Silver Bear and the film "Black Coal, Thin Ice" (by Diao Yinan) won the main prize, the Golden Bear. Liao Fan, the actor playing the main role in the film, was awarded the Silver Bear for best actor. The Japanese actress Haru Kuroki won the Silver Bear for best actress in the film "The Small House".

Four hundred films were entered in the 10th section of the Berlinare – Cinema Program. This "panorama" covered the best films. It is sufficient to say it presented the favourite Oscar nominee "American Hustle". 500,000 cinema tickets were sold. Berliners are undoubted fans of cinema. Every morning on the way to the Berlinale Palace, I enviously observed the endless queues of people waiting to see the films. Many of them brought sleeping bags to be the first in the queue.

This year the Berlinale paid tribute to some distinguished representatives of the cinema world. The contest program

included the film “Love, Drink and Sing” by 91-year-old French director Alain Resnais. The film is based on the play “Life of Riley” by British playwright Alan Ayckbourn. The film won the FIPRESCI Prize and Alfred Bauer’s Silver Bear for initiating new perspectives in artistic cinematography. It seemed strange to award the venerable director this kind of prize. The famous English director Ken Loach was awarded the Golden Bear for excellent creative biography (a retrospective of his films also was shown).

In 2013 Catherine Deneuve turned 70. In honor of her birthday she accepted many awards in different countries and this was also the case in Berlin, where the “Grand Dame” is often a visitor. The award was made to her at the opera house and the new film she plays in “At Home” was shown in the Panorama program.

Dieter Kosslick, general director of Berlinare, stated that: “It’s not enough to have good films, we need to see film stars on the red carpet!” I think that this year the number of good films was outweighed by the number of film stars, although it was a real pleasure to see them. The film festival was visited by Matt Damon, Sabine Azéma, Christopher Bailey, Tilda Swinton, Uma Thurman, Bill Murray, Bradley Cooper, Ralph Fiennes, Jean Dujardin, John Goodman, Willem Dafoe, Forest Whitaker, Diane Kruger, Shia LaBeouf, Christian Slater, Catherine Deneuve, Patricia Arquette, Stellan Skarsgård, André Dussolier, Jennifer Connelly, Andie MacDowell, Christopher Waltz, Léa Seydoux. I should also single out George Clooney. Although he visits Berlinare almost every year, this year his film “The Monuments Men” had great success. It was based on the book by Robert M. Edzel and made last year in Babelsbergh, Germany. The film tells how a group of art critics and historians, try to save world masterpieces from the Nazis during the Second World War. The main roles are played by George Clooney, Matt Damon, Bill Murray, John Goodman, and Cate Blanchett. Before the world premiere, George Clooney said: “I like to direct films. I want to have more control over my career. The relationship between an actor and a director is like that between an artist and a model. A director is responsible for everything… I love the festival in Berlin. In other places they are more interested in show, but here it is real art!”

On the red carpet in front of the Berlinare Palace, George Clooney broke a record – he happily gave out autographs for an hour and a half and only stopped because otherwise the premiere would be delayed.

At the closing ceremony of Berlinare Dieter Kosslick joked: “In Berlin we had nice warm weather because George Clooney came!”

I have nothing against George Clooney, but I would rather have good films contributing to the good weather!

» Nana Tutberidze

National Film Centre at the Berlin International Film Festival

In 2013, the Georgian National Film Centre attended the European film market organized within the framework of the 64th Berlinale for the ninth time. A Georgian presentation was shown providing the festival and film market guests and film experts with comprehensive information on the current situation of Georgian film making, including upcoming Georgian films and development strategies. A meeting was organized with National Film Centre partners and international colleagues, and various future international projects were scheduled.

In October 2014 at the largest Asian film festival, in Pusan, South Korea, there will be arranged a retrospective screening of films by Georgian female directors.

In 2015, the Documentary Film Festival in Nyon, Switzerland will focus on Georgia.

The National Film Centre has increased its collaboration with DOC Leipzig, one of the most important European Festivals.

The "Mini EAVE" professional training programs in Tbilisi will continue.

Cooperation has been established with the Annecy International Film Festival, the largest animation film festival in Europe, so that Georgia will take an active involvement in the life of the festival.

Tbilisi will take part in the European Film Academy Young Audience Award and will be among the 13 European capital cities, where new films for 12-14 year-old children will be broadcast live. Georgian adolescents will be able to vote as well.

The Film Centre organized important meetings with the European Union Foundation "Creative Europe" and established a partnership with them in order to improve the various different directions in the Georgian film sector.

The Film Centre presented a catalogue of modern Georgian films, informational brochures about the Film Centre, DVDs with modern Georgian film trailers and short films, and information about the process of film making in Georgia, including Teona Mghvdeladze-Grenade's film "Brother" which premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival.

On February 9th, the National Film Centre and the company Teliani Valley arranged a reception for foreign partners. Film specialists from various different countries gathered at the reception and interesting meetings took place in the informal environment. The Director of the Berlinale Forum, the Georgian Ambassador in Germany and other guests gave speeches at the reception to highlight the achievements of modern Georgian film.

Two Georgian films were presented in official sections of 64th Berlin international Film Festival – "The Random Dates" by Levan Koghuashvili in the Forum section and "The Brides" by Tinatin Qajrishvili in the Panorama section. The latter was awarded the special audience prize.

CAN
NES

Cannes 2014

The 67th Cannes Film Festival "This small line of the Earth lies far from anywhere, as though everybody had forgot this place. The heartbeat of an exceptional life is still felt here; if the whole world sinks into an ashen darkness, obscured with the smoke of approaching disaster, loaded with an evil premonition of danger beyond the hills, here shines a joyful sun and the foam of a dying world comes through its living flicker." - Erich Maria Remarque on Blue Riviera

The 67th Cannes film festival attendees check the weather forecast first and then look at the program. The weather is definitely very important. Why so, you ask? It is because not everybody only comes to attend the film festival in Cannes in May.

The visitors to the French Riviera are split into two distinct groups: the "day elite" and the "night elite". Last year I was a member of the "night elite", but I am a day worker this year. The first film in competition is shown at 8:30 in the morning, so I have to get up at 6 am, get ready and get to Nice station to make it to Cannes in time. Journalists and film experts who live in Cannes need to get up at 7am to see the first film… That is why people from the media nearly all fall asleep around 10pm. We are human too…

This grand festival of world film takes place in the very small and peaceful town of Cannes, France, every year at the end of May. This year it lasted for 12 days. It used to be a two-week affair, but they shortened the duration. These two days would not do any harm to the festival but they say that "the festival has grown old… but I think myself that neither time nor the festival haters can diminish its charm. If you want to see French culture and French class you need to visit the country at this particular time. An extremely boring and sleepy town changes into a vibrant cosmopolitan, and at the same time patriotic, city in the twinkle of an eye. Every time I walk along the Croisette beach I think to myself: "How can this small town hold so many people?"

To be honest, these 12 days are a real hell for the citizens of Cannes, but I will write about that later. This being the 67th festival, it is the 67th nuisance for the citizens, but a very special and significant one for us Georgians, as none other than Eldar Shengelaia's memorable film "Blue Mountains, or an Unbelievable Story" was included in the section Cannes Classics 2014. The honoured guest of the section this year was the actress Sophia Loren. The debut work by the young Georgian director Dea Kulumbegashvili, a 10-minute film "Invisible Spaces", was selected from the 3450 short films from 128 countries and made it to the top nine. I interviewed Dea and she told me that she had sent the film all by herself and the film centre had sponsored her travel costs. It is a great success for the young director to be selected in the main contest. The film is an intimate glimpse into the life of a priest's wife… It is a short film, and easy for me to tell the plot, which is why I am going to stop here, so that you can go and see the film yourselves.

The French director Olivier Dahan's film "Grace of Monaco" opened the Festival. Hollywood star Nicole Kidman was cast as the Princess of Monaco and Oscar-winning actress. The story takes place in the principality in 1956, when Grace Kelly married Rainier III. Six years after the marriage, Alfred Hitchcock offered her a role, giving her the chance to come back to Hollywood. In the meantime, President de Gaulle

was threatening to attack Monaco. The heroine had a decision to make, she had to choose between her family and her career, between Hollywood and the small principality.

The film runs for an hour and 43 minutes. Prince Rainier is played by Tim Roth. The members of the Monaco royal family did not attend the premiere, which caused a lot of controversy among the journalists and film devotees. There are several versions of explanations for this, but the most reasonable seems to be the following: "Princess Stephanie saw the film promotion and said that her parents were quite different from their portrayal in the film and the story is made up." But then the question remains: If the royal family rejects the storyline then why did they allow filming of the final scene to take place in the Monte Carlo Opera House? The rumours are still flying around and as soon as I grasp something definite I will let you know.

Nicole Kidman was a juror at the Cannes Festival last year and she appeared in the lead role of an "opening film" this year. Her acting was the subject of a lot of criticism. Film critics wrote that she could not alter her facial expression as the result of too many botox injections and watching her is extremely uninteresting and dull… I certainly agree with my colleagues, but on the other hand Tim Roth's playing of his role is nearly perfect, which definitely makes this slightly pathetic Hollywood-style film worth watching.

Now some rather more interesting stories for us_ A French newspaper seller who has been selling the newspaper "Liberation" for 25 years at the entrance to the Film Festival Palace is a fixed part of the Cannes festival culture. You can hear him everywhere yelling "Libe, libee, Liberation, Demande Libee ("read Liberation"). I bought the 14th of May's Liberation, which was all about the festival.

Older fans of the films and film stars are also essential elements of the Cannes festival. They put their chairs and stepladders right at the end of the red carpet barrier and you will need to have known them for at least 15 years before they will allow you a place in the front row. I had a talk with a couple of the senior devotees; they told me that they have about 1000 autographs of the stars and even more photos taken with celebrities. When I asked what had changed over the years and what they had disliked at the Festival these days, one of the old men who has been attending the festival for 18 years replied: "In the old days the actors wouldn't arrive by car, they would come and talk to us. It's different now. They stop here for just a couple of seconds and then rush over to the red carpet straight away."

The most interesting thing is that none of them live in Cannes, they come from different parts of France: Marseille, Paris and other cities. I found only one woman from Cannes, who told me that her husband hates this period of time in Cannes and goes to the mountains for 12 days during the festival. Her decorated stepladder drew my attention and when I asked her about it she replied simply: "looking at iron is boring, I need to decorate it."

The excited and agitated admirers look forward to the famous actors and directors coming every day. But they just wave their hands sympathetically and rush into the cinemas. I never understood how anyone could stay up all night for someone who just waves at you, gives a smile and then turns their back… and all this is done automatically. I had to attend several press conferences and photographed the "stars" with my phone camera. People who do not go beyond the palace think that the Cannes Festival is just rushing about the red carpet and nothing else. Actually the festival is the whole culture, "class" and French ranking. As soon as celebrities enter the building the interest in them fades away. Here they are attacked by embittered journalists and they cannot escape from them by simply waving. Everybody is collecting information, everybody wants exclusive news, and everybody is professional, everybody is faster than the next and they are all different nationalities…

Nuri Bilge Ceylan "Winter Sleep" (Palme d'Or)

"The festival is a great opportunity to meet up with your audience " - Ceylan

We media representatives (all 4500 of us) got lucky and were allowed to attend the film screening with the director and his family. The Red Carpet was broadcast live on the screen in the hall - how the director walked up the stairs of the famous festival palace and entered the Lumieres' Hall, where everybody was waiting for him and for the film to begin, of course, after the extremely long and hot queue. People love this director! The hall nearly exploded with applause. The audience in Cannes is very strict, so to be greeted with such an ovation is definitely noteworthy.

Erich Maria Remarque is one of my favorite writers. I always wanted to taste Calvados, as he always lets his characters drink "one glass" of it so deliciously. In the case of Ceylan I was longing for Turkish tea for 3 hours 26 minutes. I wanted it so much that I was ready to go to Anatolia for it.

The protagonist of the film, Aydin, a writer, rents a hotel room with his young wife in the centre of Anatolia. This event leads to the couple's feelings cooling down and they start to separate from each other. In winter, when everything is covered in snow, this hotel becomes a kind of a "haven" for them… This is where the alienation begins. The film is constructed from dialogues. My eyes got tired very quickly from reading French subtitles, and I was focused on not missing anything and being able to understand the context. That is why I

did not enjoy the film as much as I was supposed to. There is always a low level of music in this director's films. As he says "music incites fake feelings in the audience", and he wants to provoke emotion with dialogue and content.

The fundamentals details of life is the main theme in this director's work. He is simple and straightforward, not over decorative, which draws the audience closer to the story he is telling. He makes fun out of worn out topics, but I was not disappointed, on the contrary, I left the Lumiere Film Hall feeling very gratified. After sitting for 3 hours, standing up and stretching my legs was lovely, just as it would have been to drink a glass of Turkish tea at that moment.

"Blue Mountains"

I still do not understand if it was French calmness or Georgian discourtesy that was responsible for what happened to me, but it turned out that all my waiting and expectation was in vain. This is how it happened: I checked the Cannes Festival website to see the program several days before the opening. The program was "packed" with Georgian films. I was delightfully surprised. Along with François Truffaut, Alfred Hitchcock, Federico Fellini and Frank Capra, I saw the name of our beloved and dear director: Eldar Shengelaia. Since then I had been waiting to see the film on the wide screen. But it turned out that I was not able experience the gratifying moment of watching this often-viewed but much-loved film on the wide screen. The reason was simple: I was late for the film. Although I arrived late I spoke with people leaving the hall. They told me that it was an incredible feeling to watch a Georgian classic with foreigners and see their reactions and various emotions…
Eldar Shengelaia's grandchild told us that there was an 85-year-old lady who had specially come to see "Blue Mountains". She had seen the film a long time ago and said that she could not stop herself from coming to see the film.

Everything went well. Eldar, surrounded by Georgians, was very happy and the audience were too. It was only me who had missed it. And it was all my own fault. After the screening of the film, a Happy Hour was held in the Georgian pavilion. There were a lot of French, Ukrainian, Georgian directors, producers, and journalists… The Film Centre treated guests with churchkhela and Georgian wine; it is hard not to be tempted by these two products. Among the guests were the Georgian Ambassador Ekaterine Siradze, painter Gela Patiashvili, director Eldar Shengelaia, journalist Ninia Kakabadze, film professional Teo Khatiashvili and director Dea Kulumbegashvili.

This year's competition between films and directors was truly on a high level. The Palme d'Or, crafted in the Chopard workshops, was fought over by the Dardenne brothers, Zvyangintsev, Ceylan, Hazanavicius… The latter's film "The Search" is a Georgian-French co-production, most of it being filmed in Georgia, and it is about the war in Chechnya... After the screening many tears were shed and anti-Russian sentiment had grown significantly… Many famous directors delivered lectures in the Ukrainian pavilion. The film is hard to watch. The film critics wrote that the picture is too black and white and rectilinear. But the war in Chechnya itself was black and white and straightforward…
A big empire destroyed a small nation.

The Film Center presented Georgian film products brilliantly. Aside from the nominated films, Mariam Khatchviani and Vova Katcharava participated with their project "Dede" in the World Pavilion (Cinema du Monde) at the Cannes Festival. Four screenings were held of Tinatin Qajrishvili's film "The Brides" in the Market (Market Screenings).

The film "Party Girl" won the Palme d'Or for cinematography and one of the directors of the film is Mari Amashukeli, who is the daughter of the famous sculptor Guji Amashukeli and was raised in France. She had taken part in the competition on behalf of France.

I went up to the Festival Palace on the last day, greeted a young girl at the entrance, then the supervisor looked down at my photo on the badge, looked at me, clicked on the code label with a device and let me in. The guard checked my bag and he also let me go through. When I passed the entrance I stood in the centre of the palace and stopped… A lot of people with different reasons and purposes were rushing around me with at a busy pace. Everything and everybody was moving around very fast… I closed my eyes and began serenely listening to the noise … I was trying to memorize the sound of footsteps, the tapping on devices, the escalators and the hysterical to-and-fro. I was remembering all of this and was saying goodbye to this spellbinding atmosphere… I was leaving my beloved blue Riviera… I was leaving my home… I opened my eyes and exited my magic box with the hope that this period from May to May will not be too long and excruciating, that my beloved French people will always be awaiting for me here, as I will be looking forward to seeing them next May.

» Anna Bakuradze

DATES

BIAFF 2014

This year the Batumi International Art-House Film Festival was held for the ninth time. Nobody believed that this initiative by enthusiast film fans would be so sustainable and lead to growing interest among the audience. Art-house films are an interest to those people who love decent cinema and really appreciate it. The geographic span of the festival is very wide –Africa, South and North America, Australia, Asia and Europe. The cinematography of the latter two continents makes up the bulk of the presentations. In addition to the film screenings, there are workshops, industry meetings, masterclasses, briefings and press conferences that take place over one week. This year the film criticism section was also added.

The main attraction of the festival is its democratic nature. Anyone can meet and talk to their favorite artist. I was interested in meeting a Brazilian director to find out why cinematic art looks so modest in comparison to the blooming Brazilian TV soap operas. Sadiq Barmak introduced me to the history and problems of Afghan cinema. I heard personally from Zbigniew Rybczynski about his thoughts on film genres. And Abbas Kiarostami proved once again that life is film and film is life.

The festival team has gradually gained experience and improved over the years. The gaps that the festival faced in the beginning have been filled. The thing that is most important in attracting an audience to the festival is the program and participating films. As the organizers say, during the selection process the accent is placed on noncommercial, "authors'" films. The main criterion is the artistic quality of the film, the director's discoveries and innovations, etc. The selected films must be premiered in Georgia (sometimes, in the Caucasus region) and be made in the same year or at most in the previous year. Thus, the Batumi Film Festival always presents the fresh products of art-house cinematography which the audience can only see at festivals.

Zvian Elizian, manager of the Batumi Art-House Film Festival.

FP: The festival was very busy. What are the most important innovations of the festival this time compared to the previous years?

The festival management always tries to offer the audience a very interesting program – whether it is films, masterclasses or workshops. In this regard, this year we organized a couple of important events:

Seminars, photo exhibitions (the Yerevan Museum directors brought photos of collages by Iuri Mechitov and Parajanov) and film shows dedicated to the 90th anniversaries of Tengiz Abuladze and Sergo Parajanov.

Within the framework of the Biaff Cinema School, there were very interesting seminars on script development

Photo: Inna Margvelashvili

led by two famous experts Rustam Ibragimbekov and Irakli Kvirikadze. Especially notable was the showing of film collections from the Cannes Film Critics' Week. The event was supported by the National Film Centre of Georgia and the Ablabuda Film Company (Tamar Tatishvili and Keti Danelia). The festival was attended by Charles Tesson, Artistic Director of the Semaine de la Critique, and Fanny Aubert-Malaurie , Regional Audiovisual French Attache, with whom a special meeting was also organized.

FP: In your opinion, what else does the festival need to do to attract a bigger audience? It seemed that compared to last year, the audience numbers were lower this year.

Generally we can say that the festival is quite popular both in Batumi and in Georgia (people come to the festival from Tbilisi too). We have our media partners (television, radio, press) which helps us to actively publicize the film festival. For more than four years we have had 10-15 bloggers coming to participate in the bloggers' contest and they actively cover the festival in the blogosphere and social media. We use social media very efficiently - we have a lot of followers on the festival Facebook page and so on.

However, the festival has many needs related to finance. For example, with proper investments we could provide more effective open-air publicity- more posters, banners, billboards in the city, etc. The fact that there is only one cinema in Batumi is a serious problem as we are restricted in our film screening and can't screen them repeatedly tem. If we had an increased budget, we would be able to bring more interesting guests, increase the geographic area, etc.

As for the size of the audiences, I wouldn't say that we had many fewer people this year. The difference is that last year there were more people wanting to attend evening sessions at the Apollo Cinema than it could take. To regulate this problem (many people were disappointed that they couldn't get places), we decided to sell 5 lari tickets (with all the money going to charity projects) at the last two sessions (with the other shows being free). This made it possible to stop the queues and people could get to the sessions. The decreasing number in the audience this year may be due to the fact the tickets are not free any more. Presumably, the majority of Batumi society are not ready to pay and support charities.

FP: The most interesting issue for me is how do you manage to get so many famous film people here? How do you get them to agree to come?

- Of course, it's not easy. In a way, our foreign partners help us by recommending the Batumi International Festival. They put us in contact with the film

people and we carry on the communication. Sometimes we meet film directors and producers while travelling and visiting other festivals, and then we make negotiations about visiting the Batumi festival. Those who come to the festival introduce us to other directors and so on. We can say that basically this is more dependent on direct relationships, contacts and personal recommendations.

We can also point to some of our some additional features to make potential guests interested in the festival: there is a general interest in Georgia as a country of cultural variety and an interesting cinematographic history. Also, Batumi is a winning location – it's a seaside resort attracting many people to attend the festival and combine it with a nice holiday with the festival events in the seasonal month of September. Also, for many famous directors a small-scale festival with not too many people and formal business sometimes makes it a more attractive and positive event, and the guests leave happy and satisfied. Their visit is also recognized as a support to the festival.

For their contribution to cinematography, the Biaff Cinema School Prize was awarded to Avto Makharadze, and screenwriters and directors Irakli Kvirikadze, Rustam Ibragimbekov and Roman Balayan. The latter was the head of the jury of the film contest.

A film festival is a big celebration. Everyone agrees that despite open borders and unlimited Internet resources, the collective viewing of a film on a big screen remains very attractive. For the last two years, the film screenings have taken place in the open air, which turned out to be very organic for the seaside town. The film screenings had no lack of an audience. The assessments of the films were different, often radically so.

The idea that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach was once again proved by the film "Lunchbox" (by Rites Batra, India). A catering firm delivers the container to the wrong recipient. As a result of this unintentional mistake, an interesting mail communication begins between a young housewife and a middle-age man. The "couple" start to live in an invented world. This is a melodrama without tears and sentiment, with an unexpected ending , fine conversations, smart dialogue, and a great cast. It leaves the audience with a feeling of joy mixed with sadness.

"Free Fall" (Director Gyorgy Palfy) - I was late for the session. In spite of the clearly original script and unusual style I stayed for only 15 minutes, keeping my head down for the last 10 minutes. Nobody was happy with the session.

"Winter Sleep" (Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Turkey) based on stories by the Russian classic writer Anton Chekhov. The film attempts to see eternal issues from different viewpoints. Kindness and evil, dignity and meanness, philanthropy and selfishness, conscience and cowardice – radically different understandings and assessments of moral categories by the film's characters, and it gives the audience food for thought too. I never thought that if we don't resist and stand up to evil, through obedience and inactivity, we can wake up conscience in the evil and win it over to kindness. Maybe this is a sort of interpretation of the Biblical other cheek? This three-hour film with interesting direction, beautiful visual images, plaintive background music, and an excellent cast will bring you great pleasure.

"Correction Class" (Director Ivan Tverdovsky, Russia). I would really recommend seeing this film despite the hard themes it covers. It might remind you of the film "Play for School Children" from the 1980s. The film tells the story of adolescents, their relationships, and feelings – love, unreliability, jealousy, cruelty, and mercilessness.

The jury gave the Grand Prize to a film-drama with a happy ending - "Frank" (Dir. Lenny Abrahamson, Ireland). The Special Jury Prize went to the French/Georgian co-production Brides, dir. Tinatin Kajrishvili.

Best Film Direction - Ivan I. Tverdovsky for Correction Class (Russia/Germany);

Best Actor - Irrfan Khan for Lunchbox (India/France/Germany/USA);
Best Actress - Sylvie Marinkovic for Cure (Switzerland /Croatia/Bosnia and Herzegovina);

Best Short film -Butter Lamp (Dir. Hu Wei France/China);

The main documentary award went to Sergei Loznitsa for his latest documentary Maidan;

Special Mention went to Waiting for August directed by Teodora Ana Mihai (Belgium/Romania);

Anna Dziapshipa (Member of Jury): "This year the documentary section of the festival comprised some very interesting films, although I believe that the selection criteria needs to be refined. The competitive films this year were so different from each other that it made it difficult to set up the assessment criteria. However, eventually the decision was made in favour of the author's documentary."

The festival is over. There are now 365 days to go until the next festival. We can wait. The time will fly.

» Inga Khalvashi

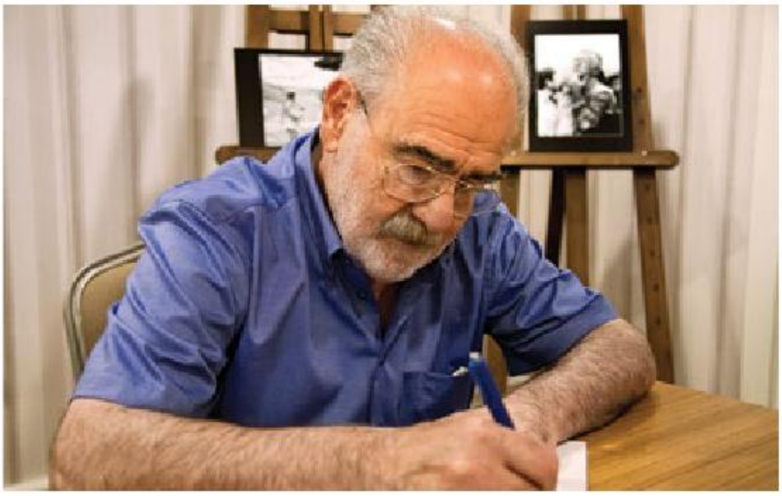


Photo: Inna Margvelashvili

Prometheus

The 15th Tbilisi International Film Festival

From the 1st to the 7th of December, Tbilisi hosted the Prometheus International Film Festival for the fifteenth time. The event is traditionally held at the end of the year and sums up the major film events that occurred during 2014. The festival program was full of high-quality films from a number of different countries. During these years, the Tbilisi Film Festival has hosted up to six hundred directors, producers, actors and film critics. In this way, it has managed to become an arena where film gourmets are introduced to high quality films. The main principle of the Tbilisi International Film Festival has been to present equally both film classics and new faces in one venue. The organizers managed to achieve this aim during the single week. While the audience in one hall of the Amirani cinema was watching "The Postman's White Nights" by Andrei Konchalovsky and meeting the legendary director, the audience in the other hall was applauding the best student short films of 2014 made by the students of the State University of Theatre and Film. It should be noted that the festival presented the best films of the last two years within the traditional festival sections, such as the European Film Forum, Horizon, Made in Germany, and Documentary World.

This year's program included a special thematic section "Green". This was the color that dominated as the symbol of this year's festival. The organizers made this decision because of the ecological situation both in the country and the whole world, and the problem of climate change. This festival was a way of making an appeal to protect nature. In the films presented in the section, attention was given to the relationship between people and the environment. In addition to the screenings during the festival, environmental institutions cooperated with the festival to hold a number of activities in the Amirani Cinema foyer. "The structure of the festival, in fact, remains the same, we just change the theme. We have the section of screenings too. The change of theme led to a change in the decoration of the festival too. For example, this year we had the green color that is associated with nature and ecology. In the Thematic section we showed documentary and feature films linked to the greening of cities and urban issues. I should also note that our industrial series, which we have carried out independently with the festival money, was very successful. Very interesting training courses were organized for young directors and producers, who acquired new skills," says Gaga Chkheidze, General Director of the International Film Festival. Again this year, the festival paid great attention to young film-makers in order to improve their qualifications and professional preparation. The "industrial days" cycle also demonstrated this; this was the reason for launching this section which combined different master classes, training sessions, conferences and presentations. Indeed, the industrial events were really interesting. A "pitching" course was held, followed by a pitching presentation in which directors and producers presented ten Georgian film projects to the jury. The winning project was awarded 3,000 GEL provided by the Georgian Film Development Fund. Presentations such as the Adjara Regional Film Promotion Program, and one about making film in Georgia - how to insure film production, were very interesting. A seminar B2B Doc was organized, aiming to promote the integration of documentary filmmakers of the post-Soviet countries – from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea – in the Nordic and European market. Within the framework of the industrial activities there was also a conference for the Georgian regional cinema network. The conference brought together "free film show" volunteers, and representatives of municipalities from the regions. The conference aims to create a regional cinema network as a first step towards the revival of the Georgian film market. During the festival, Goran Paskalevich, Eric Spitzer-Merlyn, Naum Kleiman, Reza Mirkarim, Alexandre Espigares, Zeynep Özbatur Atakan, and Peter Webber led master classes in film production, animation, script development and direction.

Apollo Cinema memory: the section organizers believe that in addition to the films, the arenas where the films are presented also have cultural value. Cinemas, along with the films, are part of the history of our film theatre. Tbilisi has preserved the Apollo Cinema built

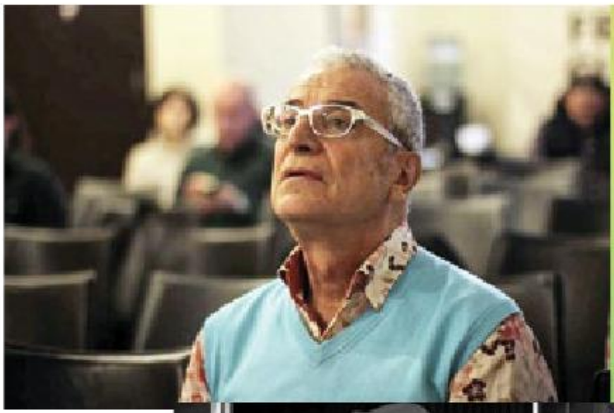


Photo: Giga Dvalishvili, Miranda Maskharashvili, Nini Mandaria, Keti Baakashvili

in 1909, but it no longer performs the function for which it was built. The aim of the section was to revive from the memory of Georgian and foreign cinemas those films which are less available for people.

The regular festival audience and people who attended the event for the first time had a unique opportunity after the film screenings to participate in a question-and-answer session with directors, actors, and other members of creative groups who specially came to Tbilisi to meet the audience. Up to 80 foreign filmmakers visited the film festival.

The special screenings also included Jivan Avetisyan's film "Tevanik", which closed the project Cinema Express. In the autumn the project Cinema Express: Armenia-Georgia was funded with the assistance of the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the Ministries of Culture of Armenia and Georgia. Cinema Express traveled to the neighboring countries and cross-border regions and presented six feature films to local audiences. On 4th December, Cinema Express came and stopped in Tbilisi at the Prometheus International Film Festival.

The European Film Forum was distinguished by its thematic diversity. Here films from almost every region of Europe were presented, beginning with Scandinavia and going right down to the South Caucasus. As I mentioned, next to famous grandmasters we met the names of novice and lesser-known directors. The key point of the program was the international competition, in which ten first feature films by European directors took part. It should be noted that the two Georgian films had never been presented at an international competition before...

"Hide and Seek" (UK) – dir. Joanna Coates;

"Name Me" (Russia) – Nigina Sayfullaeva;

"Line of Credit" (Georgia / France / Germany) – Nutsa Alexi-Meskhishvili;

"I am Beso" (Georgia) – Lasha Tskvitinidze;

Modris (Latvia/Germany/Greece) – Juris Kursietis;

"Party Girl" (France) – Mari Amashukeli, Claire Burger, Samuel Theiss

"The Tribe" (Ukraine/Netherlands) – Miroslav Slaboshpitsky

"Barbarians" (Serbia/Montenegro/ Slovenia) – Ivan Ikić

"Victoria" (Bulgaria / Romania) – Maya Vitkova;

"Violet" (Belgium/Netherlands) – Bas Devos

"The main thing in cinematography are film created by an author. Auteur films are the films we have been showing for the last 15 years now. From the very beginning we were oriented towards European film production as our international competition proves. Ten films and they were all first works. I must say that we had a very interesting panel this year. Marco Mueller is an innovator who is well-known worldwide. He has a flair for selecting new directors and movies, and this always makes the program interesting, such as those he prepared for the Locarno, Rotterdam and Venice film festivals. This speaks volumes about the progress of our festival," says Gaga Chkheidze, General Director of the festival.

This year's international jury comprised of different and interesting personalities, such as Marco Mueller – film critic and film historian, Nana

Photo: Giga Dvalishvili, Miranda Maskharashvili, Nini Mandaria, Keti Baakashvili

Ekvtimishvili – writer and director, and Peter Webber – British film director, theater and film actor.

A novelty of the festival was a separate "national contest" comprising four categories: best male and female actors, best direction and best Georgian film of 2014. Seven full-length Georgian feature films took part in the competition.

"My Blanket" – Zaza Rusadze

"Brother" – Teona Mghvdeladze and Thierry Grenade

"Line of Credit" – Nutsa Alexi-Meskhishvili

"I am Beso" – Lasha Tskvitinidze

"The Brides" – Tinatin Kajrishvili

"Corn Island" – Giorgi Ovashvili

"Behind Nine Mountains" – Levan Tutberidze

"The Village" – Levan Tutberidze

"The new initiative is that we have extended the Georgian Panorama and launched a Georgian National Contest of full-length films. Now there are four nominations, but we want to increase the number of nominations in the future. Our filmmakers are not spoiled in this respect, so it will be very important for them to receive proper respect for their work, and it also will help the further development of Georgian cinema," says Gaga Chkheidze, General Director of the film festival.

The jury of the Georgian Film Competition comprised Erika Gregor – Festival organizer and coordinator, Film critic and film historian Naum Kleiman and film critic Ulrich Gregor.

At the closing ceremony, the National Competition Jury members went up on stage to present the Prometheus awards for the first time to:

Mari Kitia ("The Brides") –best actress

Ilias Salman ("Corn Island") – best male actor

Nutsa Aleksi-Meskhishvili ("Credit Line") – best direction

Lasha Tskvitinidze "I am Beso" was awarded best Georgian film. The film was also awarded a Berlinale Film Festival voucher. Pasha Bank, the sponsor of the Georgian Panorama section, donated two tickets to the film director to travel to Berlin.

Jury members were also honored: after Presidential Decree, Deputy Minister of Culture Manana Berikashvili, awarded the Order of Honor to Erika and Ulrich Gregor for their contribution to the development of the festival.

As for the International contest:

The Silver Prometheus for best director was awarded to Juris Kursietis ("Modris"), and the Golden Prometheus went to the "The Tribe" (dir. Miroslav Slaboshpitsky). The film also won the special Sergei Parajanov prize for poetic vision.

The festival was opened by Mohsen Makhmalbaf's film "The President", and closed with the film "Quiet Life" by Uberto Pasolini.

The 15th Tbilisi International Film Festival was held under the patronage of the First Lady, Maka Chichua.

On December 7th the festival finished to meet again in one year's time.

>> Davit Chikadze

Cinema in the Town of Thermal Waters

Giorgi Ovashvili's Triumph at the Festival in Karlovy Vary

July 2014. Rain. Umbrellas. 11 degrees. I have a lung infection. However, I'm not feeling bad. I know I've got to one of the most interesting places in the cinema world.

In the Czech Republic, Western Bohemia, Czech Karlovy Vary, German Carlsbad…. The city was founded by Roman Emperor Karl IV, the Homeland of Becherovka liquer and famous porcelain. It has been a resort since the 19th century.

However, for me and probably for all those who have a special relation with cinema or simply are fond of cinema, the main feature of the town is the famous festival, the International film festival, which is one of the most prestigious and honoured cinema events in the world after Cannes, Berlin, and Venice.

It is now 49 years since the spa town began to turn itself into a film town for a couple of days, when life is on the boil. In addition to pensioners who usually visit the resort for health reasons, thousands of young cinema fans arrive during the festival.

The first thing which hits you in the eye is the Soviet architecture with its symbolism. Although rough the geometry of communist buildings does not match the lighter European atmosphere.

The small town built on the river is full of BMWs with the purpose of serving the guests of the festival. The epicenter is the Thermal Spa Hotel and the area around it, a red carpet fenced with barriers, cinemas, and industrial buildings, the guests and hosts with accreditation signs and festival badges were milling around the receptions on the terraces,. Here is the famous Douglas Beauty Parlour, helping the accredited guests of the festival feel more self-confident through having their hair and nice make-up done to look more beautiful.

The festival statistics are as follows: about 200 carefully selected films for different sections, 70 of them world premieres, 12000 tickets sold and over 11000 visitors, up to 850 professionals from the cinema industry and over 700 journalists from all over the world.

The 49th film festival this year hosted two special guests, Oscar winner Mel Gibson who was awarded the Crystal Globe for his contribution to cinema art and French film star Fanny Ardant as a film director. Georgian viewers saw Ardant's Obsessive Rhythms featuring Asia Argento in Tbilisi in 2013 when the actress and director visited Georgia upon invitation from the film center.

For the last three years Georgia has held an honoured place in the film geography of the festival. This year, in Karlovy Vary, Georgian cinema was especially widely and richly presented. Three films in different sections: Giorgi Ovashvili's "Corn Island" together with two Czech and seven international films, participated in the main competition. Levan Koghuasvili's "Blind Dates" and Rusudan Pirveli's "Sleeping Lessons"

participated in two other sections. All the three Georgian films are winners of the competitions of the National Film Center.

I asked the director of the festival Karel Och his opinion about Georgian cinema in an interview for the Imedi TV Company:

"I have a high opinion of Georgian cinema in general. We've been cooperating with the Georgian National Film Center for more than 3 years now and every year we include a special Georgian film in different sections. This year's contest film "Corn Island" is a true masterpiece. Visually the film is breathtaking, continuing the old tradition in the best way". 'A masterpiece', it made me happy to hear such an evaluation.

I made another short interview with Eva Zaoralova, the founder of the festival:

"I remember years ago Nana Jorjadze came to our festival together with Pierre Richard. The actor was awarded a prize for best actor in the film "A Chef in Love".

"As for this year's contest film, "Corn Island", it is an amazing work, visual effects, masterly work by the film director and the cast, the film is almost without dialogue, but you can still understand everything. A real masterpiece"

Again, the word "masterpiece" about the new Georgian film from a highly experienced professional. I was proud to hear that modern Georgian cinema, which is thought by some members of Georgian society to be 'dead', was highly appreciated and valued here.

Before the premiere there was a so-called "press screening", followed by the press conference. The special interest in the film was evident. "Corn Island" was top of the critics' ratings. The main discovery of the film director, 15-year old Mariam Buturishvili, came to the Czech Republic for the premiere. The interview with Mariam turned out to be difficult as she is not talkative. However, I managed to learn that she did not find it difficult to work with Giorgi and that she dreams to jump from a parachute. The director and the little actress walked along the red carpet dressed in green.

The creative group of "Corn Island" walked up to the stage and Karel Och presented the film to a crowded audience which couldn't wait to see the work of the Georgian director. The film is about an Abkhazian grandfather and his granddaughter, about the power of nature in related to a human's existence. The Enguri river bed on the border of Georgian and Abkhazia created new borders: an artificial island wrote a new history. The director brought this human story and his idea to an audience of various nationalities as intimately as to Georgians themselves. After 100 minutes, when the lights were turned on in the hall, an abundance of tears and ovations lasted for a long time. In this most emotional of moments I recorded a very emotional interview with Giorgi Ovashvili: "I've seen off and finished this film, now I'll wave goodbye to it".

Three days after the premiere, as soon as we came back to Tbilisi, we heard that the film had already found its way forward. At the first festival it won the first important prize, the Grand Prix of the Crystal Globe. The prize is one more example of the great success of the Georgian cinema of recent times. In Karlovy Vary the film was also awarded the prize of the Ecumenical Jury. After the triumphant beginning, "Corn Island" will continue its festival life in other countries, with Giorgi Ovashvili writing new appropriate scripts.

One more successful Georgian film, "Blind Dates" by Levan Koghuashvili, got on the Europe Today program in the festival. The well-known publication "Variety" named it among the top 10 European Films. The Georgian director was also a member of the Jury of one of the festival sections "East of the West".

Rusudan Pirveli's "Sleeping Lessons" participated in one of the sections of the Czech film platform "Work in Progress". Later the film, which is not yet finished, might find a new producer.

One of the important parts of festival life are receptions. In this kind of environment, the fate of many future film productions are discussed and decided over a glass of wine. One of these receptions was dedicated to the achievements of new Georgian cinema. The reception was held for the National Film Center and Ministry of Culture within the 49th Festival.

» Ninia Akhvlediani

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

al, July 4 – 12,
2014
Karlo
y Vary
Fest

SARAJEVO + TBILISI = <3 <3

Georgian film appeared at the Sarajevo Film Festival for the first time in 2009 when they showed Levan Koghuashvili's film "Women from Georgia" in the documentary film panorama.

Two years later in 2011, a Georgian delegation visited the festival upon the initiative of festival director Miro Purivatra and Tamar Tatishvili, then director of the National Film Center.

Since that year the industry platform Cinelink was opened up to Georgian directors., The presentation of selected projects takes place within Cinelink over several days. Here the foundations are laid for future cooperation between producers from different countries.

Here is how all it began…

In 2013, Nana Ekvtimishvili's film "Long, Light Days" won The Heart of Sarajevo, the Grand Prize of the Sarajevo Festival, while the actresses playing the main roles, Mariam Bokeria and Lika Babluani, shared the prize for the best female role. The Cinelink prize was awarded to Rusudan Glurjidze's project "House of Others".

This year Georgian cinema has really invaded the Sarajevo festival and six Georgian films were presented:

Documentary film section: "King" by Shalva Shengelia; short-film section: ""Invisible Spaces" by Dea Kulumbegashvili; main contest: "I am Beso" by Lasha Tskvitinidze (Producer Nodar Nozadze) and "Brides" by Tinatin Kajrishvili (Producers: Sebastian Ober, Suliko Tsulukidze, Lasha Khalvashi). Levan Koghuashvili's "Blind Dates" and the French-Georgian film production "The Search" by Michel Khazanovichus took part in the non-competition section.

At the presentation, "I am Beso", with Lasha Tskvitinidze (director), Nodar Nozadze (producer), Shalva Soqurashvili (cameraman), and actors Tsotne Barbakadze and Soso Tarqashvili, was announced to have the youngest crew in the history of the festival.

After the presentation, a Georgian reception was held at the hotel Bosnia. The evening was hosted by Tamar Tatishvili, the Georgian representative in Eurimage. The festival director as well as the guests noted that the high number of Georgian films at the festival this year was not accidental. They saw it as the manifestation of a new wave of Georgian cinema and expressed their deep faith in its future success.

The British training program Film London presented five Georgian projects in the festival. Projects by Vako Kirkitadze and Nino Jincharadze, brothers Beso and Irakli Solomonashvili, Rusudan Pirveli, Rusudan Glurjidze and Zura Maghalashvili, Keti Machavariani attracted the attention of producers attending the festival and the prospect of future cooperation was put in place.

The Georgian epic at the Sarajevo festival had a triumphant finale: Sarajevo's second "Heart" found its way back to Georgia again: Tina Kajrishvili's "Brides" won the hearts of the jury and hence was awarded the Jury Prize. Georgian female actors were distinguished again and this time Mari Kitia was awarded the prize for the best actress.

Nana Ekvtimishvili's new project "My Happy Family", the winner of last year's Cinelink, won the Eurimage Co-Production Development Prize.

The 2014 film festival season will finish in three months, and hopefully it will finish with exciting new victories for Georgian cinema.

» Keti Machavariani

ОЗОРИШ
SARAJEVO
FILM
FESTIVAL

The 8th Tbilisi International Student Festival Amirani

"Who knows what kind of cinematographic destiny the future and Amirani are preparing for this year's winners…" This is how my colleague Khatia Maghlakelitdze finished her article about the Student Film Festival for Film Print's autumn 2013 edition. My reply to her now is that the film "Crossroads", which was the winner in 2013, is opening the Tbilisi International Student Festival Amirani 2014, and the film, together with its writer Zura Demetrashvili, is at the Tel-Aviv International Student Festival.

Amirani is a springboard for novice directors in the international arena - not only for Georgian students, but also for foreign students, who there were many of at the festival this year. New relationships, new knowledge, an international arena, striving to make dreams true, these opportunities are being fully used by young people. This is a celebration of cinema which opens up an international network for novice film artists; an arena around which eastern and western cinema revolves. A different space, atmosphere, a magic world and more cinema fans infected with the "film virus"… all this began in 1978. Amirani was founded by leading figures of Georgian cinema, such as Nana Janelidze, Tato Kotetishvili, Nana Jorjadze, Paata Iakashvili, and Dito Tsintsadze. It found its own niche in our cultural life. However, the festival ceased to exist at the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In 2007, with the help of the Theatre and Film Georgian State University, the festival became a major event again.

It's a very important festival because in fact, this is how young directors start their career in big cinema. When they present their films in front of international jury, they have a big responsibility, and it always happens, believe me, that the names you hear now will be famous ones in the future. All my generation was "baptized" at Amirani and almost all of them won prizes. I was in a very strong group with Temur Babluani, Nana Jorjadze, Dito Tsintsadze, Gia Mataradze, Dato Janelidze, Tato Kotetishvili – almost all of us were "dipped" in Amirani and after receiving awards, achieved big success in the big world of cinema… So Amirani is a very significant festival especially for Georgia and we always welcome and support it! – Nana Janelidze, Director of the Film Center.

The 8th Tbilisi International Student Film Festival lasted for 5 days. Rainy weather at the official opening ceremony has become a tradition which creates a somewhat romantic environment.

The background music by the conservatoire's big band provided a positive atmosphere in the yard of the Theatre University. Over 300 films from film schools in 23 countries were presented at the festival – Finland, Germany, Belgium, Israel, Denmark, Great Britain, Columbia, Ukraine, Russia, Morocco, Czech Republic, Philippines, Slovakia, Austria, Turkey, Spain, India, Portugal, Poland, Brazil, Vietnam, Greece and Georgia.

The number of applicants is increasing from year to year, which makes the Amirani Festival more interesting and attractive with its program, workshops and training courses.

With guidance from film critic Irina Demetradze, the films were whittled down and 50 films out of the 300 were selected for the contest program, which was divided into feature, documentary and animation films.

The international jury of the festival comprised representatives from different film schools:

Dirk Hoyer – Estonia (Baltic Film School);

Bert Beyens – Belgium (RITS School of Arts);

Zuzana Gindl-Tatarova – Slovakia (Eurimage Board Member, VSMU);

Roman Shirman – Ukraine (Ukrainian Media Union's General Secretary);

Ron Ninio – Israel (Sem Spiegel Film and TV School).

For the first time this year, with the support of National Film Center, the festival was attended by 20 authors of films from the official competition program. At Amirani they participated in the festival's educational and cultural activities, met Georgian colleagues and worked together with them in the "continuous shots" (single-shot movie) workshop, which involved several film productions in parallel with the festival.

With the support of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, for the first time this year a round-table discussion was organized to discuss issues in cinema education. The meeting was held at the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia and 15 European and Regional film schools were invited. They founded an international platform uniting several universities via a Memorandum of Cooperation. Within this project, the Art University of Turkey and the Georgian State University of Theatre and Film made friends and they will conduct exchange programs. A quota of students will be sent from Georgia to Turkey, where they will attend master classes and training within the course.

"Turkey organizes many interesting master classes with the participation of

well-known professionals. This will be a real luxury for our students" – Jaba Silkharulidze, Festival Director.

The event at the Ministry of Culture was attended by professors, rectors and deans of film departments of leading film schools from Georgia, Turkey, Estonia, Sweden, Slovakia, Ukraine, Israel, Romania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, and Greece.

The Tbilisi International Student Festival was supported by: the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, the Georgian National Center of Cinematography, Tbilisi Centre of Cultural Events, Tbilisi Council, and the Embassy of Israel in Georgia. The festival partners were: Goletiani Trading House, NOKIA X, Sarajishvili Cognac, and Margebeli Water – Nabeghlavi. The festival was actively covered by the partner media: Radio Fortuna, GHN News Agency, Georgia Today, the magazine FOCUS, and the TV company Music Box.

Master classes led by international jury added great value to the festival. The workshops covered a wide range of topics and themes of cinematic art. For example, in her master class Professor Zuzana Gindl-Tatarova discussed the differences between narrative in European and Hollywood cinema through an analysis of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" by Melos Forman. She compared Hollywood's three-act structure with the dramaturgy of Aristotle, emphasizing the "misalliance" form of Forman's film and believing Forman to be a true American director. In his workshop, Bert Beyens broke through the stereotypes of fine Voice Over and discussed subjects such as: "Sound and Identity, Sound and Language, Sound and Technique. Voice Over often is the first or the last taboo in film schools, where a teacher works out a task and exercises in both feature and documentary films. However, the shocking truth is that intellectual and fine Voice Over is used very intelligently in many inspiring films." As for Ron Ninio, in his master class he spoke about editing and showed the audience films he has authored and directed. The documentarist Roman Shirman led a master class/film screening based on a discussion of the documentary "Dangerously Free Man".

The closer a festival gets to its end, the more excited the participants become. And not only the participants but everyone looks forward to finding out the winners and sharing their happiness. As for the awards, the winners in the main nominations were:

Best Feature Film – "My Father's Truck" directed by Mauricio Osaki (Brazil-Vietnam)

Best Documentary – "Alfonse" directed by Judith Devlieger (Germany)

Best Animation – "Wind" directed by Robert Löbel (Germany)

The prize of the Student Jury was awarded to the film "Wind" directed by Robert Löbel (Germany), while the films "The Forgotten" directed by Ehab Tarabieh (Israel) and "Mi ojo Derecho" directed by Josecho de Linares (Spain) were awarded the Jury's special prize.

Participating students were also awarded diplomas in various categories:

Best Direction – "It's All about Blood" directed by Guram Bakradze (Georgia);

Best Sound – "Dreng", sound by Sune Kaarsberg (Denmark);

Best Cinematographic Work – "My Father's Truck" by Pierre de Kerchove (Brazil-Vietnam);

Best Editing – "Kuchen Essen/Eating Cake", editing by Jana Bürgelin (Germany);

Best Script – "Auschwitz on My Mind" by Assaf Machnes (Israel);

Special Mention for Feature Short – "Wij Allen/ Only us" directed by Anthony Nti (Belgium);

Special Mention for Documentary – "Us – Two Rascals" directed by Salla Kallio (Finland);

"It's a fact that the festival has been developing over the years and, in general, I am very satisfied. Maybe there were not many very good films or there was a master class that somebody didn't like, but overall, no-one can deny that it went well… I'm happy that international interest in the festival is very high. If five years ago we had to make a great effort to attract 4-5 countries and make the jury international. Last year, and especially this year, we have completely solved this problem and as a result, the number of foreign guests was at a maximum. We do our best to develop the festival and make it popular." – Jaba Sikharulidze, Festival Director.

The range of feelings, themes and the process of searching for innovations differed among the student directors participating in the festival Amirani. Some talked about war, drugs, smuggling and chaos, some wanted to escape from responsibilities and achieve their freedom, some shared their visions of God, and some suffered the pain of leaving the childhood behind and parting with a grandmother…

Film festivals are not only opening and closing ceremonies. They are the means for establishing new relationships, competing for success, fame, and the opportunity to challenge oneself. The most important thing in making a director feel enthusiastic about taking part is reaching the audience. It is interesting to know what the student filmmakers feel when the audience understands what they want to say and applauds, when they are leaving the cinema thoughtful or happy and with a lot to think about. This stimulus helps young directors who have a long journey ahead of them.

» Davit Chikadze

Photo: Davit Chachanidze

Nikozi Festival

Last year the Nikozi Animated Film Festival was attended by Katrin Küchler, the director of the Dresden Animated Film Festival. At the end of the festival she said: "the Nikozi festival is an oasis in the desert." The oasis-festival, which is located one kilometer from Tskhinvali, was this year held for the fourth time on 1st-6th September. This festival is special because it does not have a typical contest and awards ceremonies, etc. Instead, the invited guests and hosts make a joint effort to carry out a kind of "anti-festival", which is more important than the standard animated film festivals. It is just regrettable that only a small group of people visit the festival regularly from the capital…

In the village of Nikozi, the St. Alexander Chrysostom School serves the dioceses of Nikozi and Tskhinvali. The school has 120 students studying various artistic fields, including animation and shadow theatre. The school and the festival were established under the leadership of Bishop Isaiah, the Metropolitan of Nikozi and Tskhinvali.

On the first day of the festival, the Polish film director Alexandra Korievo and producer Eva Sobolevska presented the best films of the 1980s and 1990s from the Poznan Studio. The Polish program was organized by artist Mikhail Bogutsky, who is a regular visitor to Nikozi. This year's festival also screened a German animation which was previously shown with success at the Dresden Animated Film Festival, one of the most important festivals in Europe. Animated films that had taken part in the World Festival of Animated Films in Varna (Bulgaria) in 2012-2013 were also shown at Nikozi. From the world of Russian animation, the Nikozi festival was host to director and producer Natalia Orlova and Tengiz Semenov (Animos Animation Studio), director Anna Shepilova, (Soyuzmultfilm), and

directors Mikhail Aldashin and Sergei Seryogin (animated films from the Russian Suzdal Echo Open Festival). Unlike last year, this year's festival held master classes in the production of animated film and sound directing. One of the most important visitors to the festival was German film director and artist Raimund Krumme, and an exhibition of his paintings was held after the screening of his distinctive and original animations. Raimund Krumme said: "This is my first visit to Georgia. I love this place and the Georgian people. And I like the films presented at the festival. This is a non-standard, different kind of festival. This is proved by the presence of Gela Kandelaki, who successfully leads the shadow theatre. I was fascinated by this theatre... and the most important thing about the festival is that these wonderful children are involved in it. I don't know if all of them do animation themselves, but I saw that they were fascinated by the festival. I saw one of them painting – imagine what a big step the festival makes towards integrating these children into the arts. They do all of this with deep feeling and heart, and this is the main thing."

Marcel Jean, artistic director of the Annecy Animation Film Festival, visited the festival and brought two of the winning films from Annecy. He talked about the situation in France and the role of the state in French animation. Marcel Jean's fellow-puppeteer Monique Sheigam presented her own performance to the audience.

Nikozi was also visited by American animator Kehl Leslie, who conducted a seminar on how to prepare an animated film project for production. There was also an exciting three-day master class in animated film sound directing by Italian sound engineer and composer Anders Martinonis, who also organized a retrospective of Italian animated films.

There were other famous visitors to this year's event. Among them was American Rod Diamond, who at the end of the 1970s founded the distribution company Max Media, which has made more than 1600 commercials and film subtitles. The American guest presented Acme Filmworks - a production of visual history, and also led a master class. The festival was also visited by Japanese producer Sashiko Kondo, who worked in Japan's first computer-graphics lab and who set up PH Studio Inc. in 1993, which works on projects in the wide spectrum of advertising,

The intensive involvement of the producers in the Nikozi Festival may result in a number of joint co-productions in future. Producer Olivier Caterin presented the film "Les Trois Ours" by the Animation Film Studio.

A cultural program for the invited guests was provided in tandem with the festival. There were performances by the Budrugana Gagra Shadow Theatre, the Gori Women's Choir, and an evening of piano music in the company of Tamar Zhvania. The Anchiskhati choir also introduced the audience to Georgian church and folk songs.

Mariam Kandelaki, one of the organizers of the festival, said that interest in the festival is increasing annually, and negotiations are being carried out concerning next year's festival program. Among the participants of the Nikozi Festival in September 2015 will be Canadian, British, Italian, and Brazilian animators. And the European Film Academy (EFA) will join us next year with a full-length animated film. So we can say that next year the Nikozi Festival will be even more impressive in its scale and artistic diversity.

›› Neno Kavtaradze

Photo: Davit Chachanidze

Acme Filmworks - Ron Diamond

American producer Ron Diamond visited Nikozi Festival this year. At the end of the 1970s he founded his own distribution company Max Media which paved the way for short films on the newly established cable and security TV market. In 1985 Max Media bought the distribution company Expanded Entertainment and for the following six years it was busy making short films, including: "The Man who Planted Trees" by Frederic Black, "Balance" by the twin brothers Wolfgang and Christoph Lauenstein, "The Cow" by Aleksandre Petrov, and "Your Face" by Bill Plympton.

In 1990 Diamond founded Acme Filmworks, which made more than 1600 commercials. He is one of the successful producers in animation and not only there…

FP: This is your first visit to Georgia and the Nikozi festival. What are your impressions?

I take part in many festivals including large-scale and popular ones where people pay money to attend, and also relatively small festivals. Nikozi Festival impressed me hugely. This is a forum which, in fact, has no budget and is still very unique and interesting. Apart from the animation, one of the main components of the festival is the devoted people who contribute to the festival through putting a huge amount of love and energy in it. These people come here from Tbilisi and Gori. But the local people, the Nikozi residents who make the festival with love, are the most important. For me personally, Mr. Gela Kandelaki and his Shadow Theatre are the most memorable. I've never seen anything like this before. It is a miracle! And Mr. Gela himself is amazing. He leads everything with a special sensitivity and his relationship with the Nikozi children is also very special.

FP: At the end of the 1970s you founded your own distribution company Max Media…

After finishing film school I was constantly looking for something. I became

very impressed with animation and short films. Making such films is wonderful. You make a five-minute film, building a character with distinctive features, making up a story and you do all this with the help of a small group. In the 1970s there was a boom in animated feature films. After finishing film school, I produced of two or three films. The number of films increased over the years. Max Media paved the way for short films on the cable and TV market.

FP: In 1990 you founded Acme Filmworks. What have your main activities been since then?

In the beginning I was a producer of feature films, made TV commercials together with directors, and collected animations. I produced all of these. By that time, I had significant, valuable short films and could make them available for hundreds of people. Acme Filmworks made over 1600 animated commercials; it also hired films by Bill Plimpton, Michael Dudok, Amanda Forbis.

FP: The space of animated cinema has a different essence and specificity compared to feature and documentary cinema. How difficult is it to be a producer of an animated film in the modern cinema world?

In general it's very difficult as there is no average level. You are either a very good professional or very weak. Founding your own studio is the best way to become an independent producer. Therefore, I've set up the animation studio to be independent in this field. I am constantly searching, looking for interesting artists to work with in the future, watching their short films and giving them a chance to work in my company.

FP: What is the difference between American and European production spaces?

In America there are no producers in the area of short films. In the European area "short producing" is more popular. I love to work with Europeans and so I work with them a lot. Basically, I make commercials and only rarely short films, which are made for festivals, museum performances and installations. So they are not mass productions with commercial aims, but for local art house cinemas. In American cinema, in the animation industry, a producer is the main player, as is the case everywhere today, but especially in the States as we have no state subsidies unlike in Europe, where directors are worshipped and treated like kings, whereas in America a director is the part of a film's artistic group.

FP: Last year an American producer Jim Stark visited Tbilisi. He stated that Georgia is an interesting place for film production and an attractive market for producers. Would an experienced producer like yourself be interested in the production of Georgian animation and the Georgian market?

You have a better chance, but of course, this will only happen over time, maybe in the following 10-20 year period when the new generation will grow up. To make an interesting product you need to have a budget like that of the DreamWorks Studios. My company can make a film for an interesting director for even 200,000. You must try to find a producer who will agree to work for little money but the idea in animation is the key to achieving success. A producer helps to fulfill a goal and implement a project in order for it to get discovered and recognized later at the various festivals.

FP: Having your name in the credits must be a great help to young filmmakers, isn't that so?

Of course, a producer helps a director to get a project done. He puts together and unifies all the existing parts and details. It all looks like magic. However, sometimes this is very difficult to do. It depends on what the project requirements are and how many people are involved. There are cases where good and bad projects are implemented with equal success.

FP: What is your role as producer in your teaching activities?

People from India, Germany, and Poland come to visit our Los Angeles studios. We don't pay them for their work. They are being trained, which is very important especially for beginners.

FP: Nowadays, expressive animation techniques have been enriched and, in addition to the classic hand-drawn animation and puppet animation, 3D pictures have been developing with great success. Considering the existing market, what kind of animation do you prefer as a producer?

This depends on what the idea and the project requires. I always ask the question: do we need to make either 3D, puppet animation, or a picture? If the material demands 3D, you choose this using all the expressive methods, which will help make the project a higher quality.

» Neno Kavtaradze

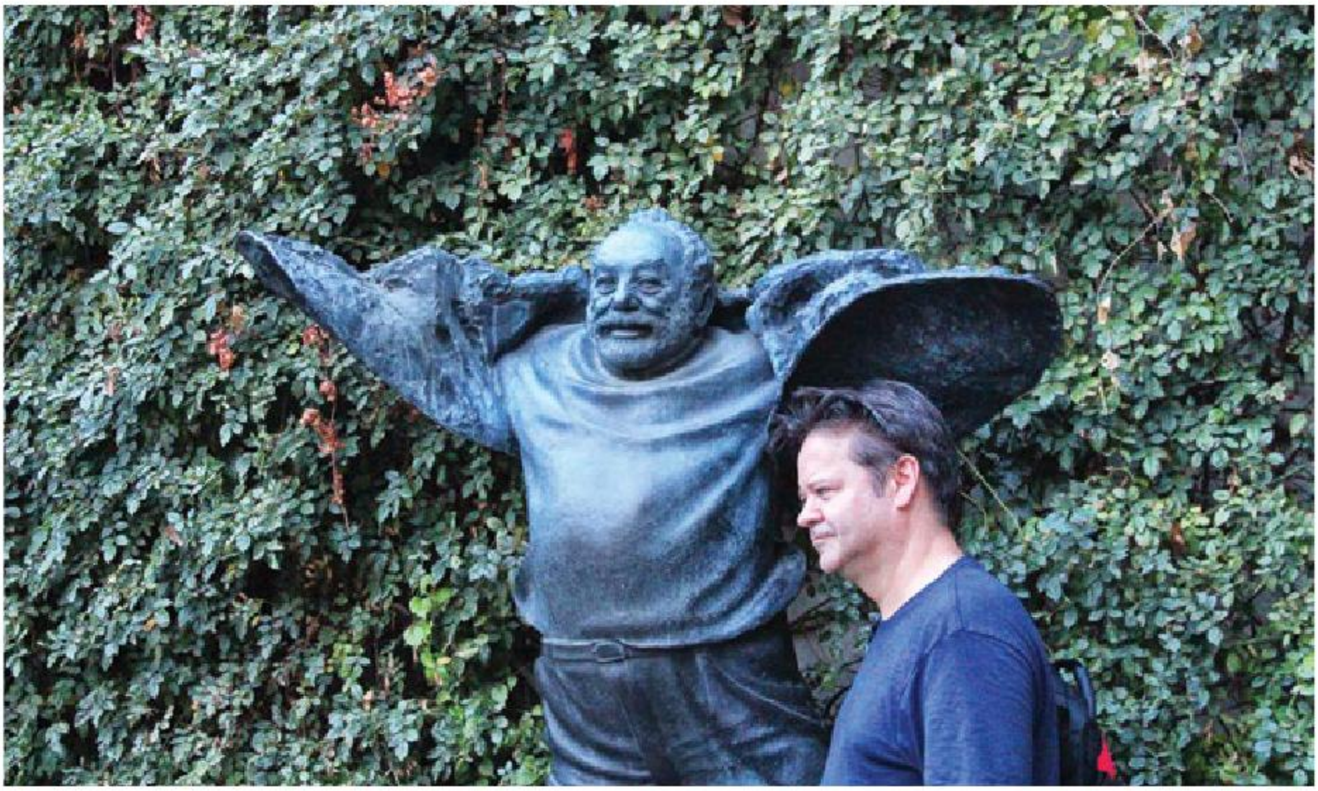


Photo: Davit Chachanidze

Interview with Marcel Jean

Annecy International Animated Film Festival is a top event in terms of its worldwide significance and popularity. The festival was established in 1960 and since then the town of Annecy in France has been hosting these important days in world animation in the beginning of June. The festival is one of the four forums funded by the International Animated Film Association ASIFA. This year the director Marcel Jean, who is art director of the festival, visited the Nikozi festival.

FP: What main sections does the Annecy Festival include?

In total there are four sections: full-length films, short films, student films, while the fourth section comprises important films made in the internet space, and the advertising and TV industries.

FP: Do you select the films yourself?

There are three of us who are leading this job – it is quite a difficult process as 2000 films will be selected worldwide.

FP: 1960 was a new beginning for you. Whose idea was the festival that year? Who is the originator of the festival?

That's a good question. Until 1960 there was no idea of such a festival. In the States hand-drawn animation similar to those made by Disney was popular. In Europe during the same period, they began to create animations which can conventionally be called avant-garde – they were images made with various different strange techniques and they were very different to American Disney animations. For example, the puppet films in Prague, Czech Republic. At the end of the 1950s, a symposium was held at the Cannes festival. As serious changes were taking place in European animation from a visual or ideological point of view, it was necessary to have a space where all these films would be distributed. At first they wanted to show the new animations within the Cannes Film Festival, but soon they realized that Cannes Festival was not the appropriate venue and they tried to find a new venue in France. In this period, film clubs were very popular, but there was no such place in the town of Annecy. So the first priority was to sort this problem out in order to show the new animation and this is how the festival was launched. That is why 1960 is significant for us – this is the year when the International Animated Film Association ASIFA was founded.

FP: Did ASIFA provide financial support to the Annecy Festival?

ASIFA funded the Annecy festival

This is strategically a very important area, where producers and directors interested in animation meet

until 1998. This connection involved a lot of requirements and it was impossible to meet all of them. It should be noted that the Annecy festival was not held annually but only every other year until 2000, since when it became an annual event.

FP: One of the significant components of your festival is the International Animation Film Market Mifa, where more than 7000 professionals meet annually...

Yes, Mifa is very easy to get to. Only registration has to be paid for your team. You can independently participate and register your film. This is strategically a very important area, where producers and directors interested in animation meet. The festival is an artistic space; Mifa is essentially business-oriented.

FP: This is your first visit to Georgia, what are your impressions?

I would say that the biggest impression is what is happening in the village of Nikozi, how the children of Gela Kandelaki's Animation Studio work and create animations. This, I have to emphasize, is the most impressive thing for me! That is the main reason why I am happy to be here! In addition, the village is located geographically and politically in such an important place. Three days ago I saw a shadow puppet theater, it was a miracle! I met people who have so much love for animation and who strive for it; now they have a chance to be in the wider industry. You know, in a month's time I will be in Hollywood meeting representatives from Disney DreamWorks Studio and Pixar Studio, the people who spend billions of dollars in making animations... When you are here in Nikozi, you understand the very simple reasons why people like animation.

FP: 3D animation is rapidly gaining ground and taking over with great success. What is the priority for you during the selection process at Annecy: classical technology or pictures which fit 3D dimension?

There are films with very simple methods of expression, for example, we can now create an animation on our phones, edit it on a personal computer and send it to a festival…

FP: Including the Annecy Festival?

You know, some films at the Annecy Festival do not have a budget at all; they are completely experimental in nature. The idea is key! The program of the Annecy Film Festival last year included a Mexican film which had been created over two years. Its creator was at work in the daytime and at night he worked on the film. Every year we receive films from different countries: Moldova, Kuwait, Chile, Argentina... This is animation from poor countries. I mean films by directors who do not have money or a budget...

FP: Has Georgian animation ever been included in the official competition?

One Georgian film was included in the Soviet era, but I cannot remember any from independent Georgia…

» Neno Kavtaradze

CineDoc -Tbilisi2014

The Second International Documentary Film Festival was held in Tbilisi, on October 14-19. This festival is the first in the whole Caucasus and the honor of opening it was given to the film "Do you Believe in Love?" by Dan Wasserman (Israel). For five days cinema fans had the opportunity to see documentaries of various genres, participate in talks, and attend master classes on topics such as sound in documentary cinema, my favorite cinema, human's rights in documentary cinema, etc. Nine films participated in this year's festival. The jury: Luciano Barisone (Director of the Vision du Reel Festival), Nana Janelidze (Director of the Georgian National Film Center) and Simone Baumann (Producer). The section Focus Caucasus presented ten films. Here the jury comprised Mélanie de Vocht (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam - IDF), Professor Stephan Wackwitz (Director of the Georgian Goethe Institute), and Darya Bassel (Program Coordinator of Docudays UA International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival of Ukraine).

The third section of the festival (CineDoc Young) had a special jury comprised of… children. This was the space where film sessions for children gained an educational meaning. The festival this year presented the audience with three new sections: the section "Other Space" presented the themes related to migration; the section "IDFA Focus" presented the best documentaries, and finally "Ukrainian Voices". The show was funded by Idfa Berta Fund. There was also a screening of the film "Euromaidan Rough Cut", which is a collective work by young directors and activists. It portrays the revolutionary wave of the famous events in contemporary Ukraine. As last year, the audience was this year again introduced to three Georgian films: "Another City" by Zura Inashvili, Shalva Shengeli's "Sovereign" and Anna Tsimintia's "The Library". The Goethe Institute also held special meetings for young Georgian documentary filmmakers to presented their new projects to film professionals. The festival was also distinguished by the fact that almost every film was accompanied by its director, so that the audience had the opportunity to talk with them after the film session.

Interest in auteur documentaries in Georgia is increasing all the time, which was proved once again at the CineDOC Tbilisi festival this year.

International Competition Program:

Best film award went to "Judgement in Hungary" (Dir. Hestzer Hajdu).

Special mention was awarded to "Ne Me Quitte Pas" (Dir. Sabine Lubbe Bakker and Niels van Koevorden).

Best film of FOCUS CAUCASUS went to "Blood" (Dir. Alina Rudnitskaya).

Special mention was awarded to "Zelim's Confession" (dir. Natalya Mikhailova) and "The Library" (dir. Anna Tsimintia).

CineDOC-Young:

Our special jury – the young people – gave the main award of this section to "The Barrel" (dir. Anabel Rodriguez Rio).

The Public Prize was given to the opening film of the festival "Do you Believe in Love?" (Dir. Dan Wasserman).

» Mari Kapanadze

Photo: Keti Baakashvili, Ninia Sabadze

Interview with Archil Khetaguri

FP: You first became known through your "Documentary Mondays", which was a successful project. I remember full halls, sharp discussions, simply it caused a lot of interest. Was this the push, the stimulus for the festival to be founded and to become large-scale?

"Documentary Mondays" was an advance project for the festival. We had to understand how much interest there was in society. When we got an idea for the festival, we thought that there was ground that we had to prepare, to see what people were interested in. Previous to that, we had Cinemobile Caucasus". In addition to Georgia, we also went to Armenia and Azerbaijan, to see what was happening there. They didn't have this kind of festival either. We went everywhere, including the universities and so forth. What kind of people would come to cafes, what themes are they interested in, what format, we had discussions without directors, and in fact it was a mini-festival project. After two years of preparation and research, we plunged in and took the risk.

FP: When you announced the date of the festival, what was the quality of the material you got from Georgia? What do you think about the level of Georgian creative documentary film?

There were quite a lot of films. There were films which, I would say, were not quite technically polished, but it's not only a technical failure… There were some TV films which were technically polished, but they are just of a different format...

FP: There were a lot of famous guests at the festival this year and last year too. Film industry meetings were also held – did you get any results for Georgian documentarians from last year's festival and are there any projects planned for the future?

There were the same people at the industry meetings this year who participated in the workshops last year. Some of them are in the process of editing, some are still filming, some haven't even started yet. It's always like this. There is no way that you do a workshop and every project is finished. For example, Nika Tsiklauri's project is in a good phase and a very experienced German producer has become involved in his project. This is a long-term process, nothing happens in 2-3 days, international-level directors have to go through the same process. There were some fund representatives, purchasing agents, and producer Simeon Bauman. During the interviews they showed interest in various different projects.

FP: Are they interested in the Caucasus in general?

Yes, but not everybody is. Television, MDR, who we brought here, has some interest in the post-Soviet countries. If Simone Bauman sees something interesting, he gets involved in the film production. There are very few people from western television interested in films from the Caucasus region. It is interesting in the political section, but not enough to bring the whole of the West here.

FP: In your opinion, is this festival able to raise the audience's awareness and guide its perception in a specific direction? Can it change the way the audience perceives documentary films?

The program was very well selected, and the guests themselves acknowledged it. Many of those who came and saw the films liked them. Documentary movies are becoming more and more popular in northern Europe countries. In general, film selection is much more interesting in small festivals than in the big ones. We are not oriented towards the premieres, and as we are not restricted, we have the freedom to pick really interesting films. Noncommercial television must get involved in raising the audience's interest. Politicized society should switch to a different space, where there is more diversity. That would be really positive.

FP: You had several new sections this year: "The Other Space", "Sounds of Ukraine"… somehow you are responding to the social and political events.

We started with three main sections. Every festival has an international contest program. Focus Caucasus is still different. As long as the Caucasus is in focus there had to be one section oriented on this and many festivals don't have Cinedoc Young which is kind of a children-youth program. If you don't include young people, the festival will slowly disappear. This is what will create the interest for the future. The new sections this year were: "The Other Space", "Sounds of Ukraine" and IDFA. We didn't plan to have this section, many films shared the same topic and we united them into one section. The festival progresses like this, you should have diversity every year. The festival must be focused not on prizes, but on showing films with interesting content. Let's see what the films are going to be like next year, what topics we get, and that will determine the sections.

›› Keti Baakashvili

Golden Eye International Festival of TV and Movie Cameramen

"We are pleased that Tbilisi is hosting the Golden Eye International Festival. This year it is taking place for the fourth time and fully justifies the purpose for which it was initially set up. The festival promotes the professional development of people working in the TV and film industry. A clear example of this are the master classes led by world-renowned filmmakers. I wish the festival great success!"– Mikheil Giorgadze, Minister of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia.

16th-18th October, 2014, No. 1 Melikishvili Avenue, Tbilisi, Georgia – the Event Hall. The attention of worldwide brands of equipment as well as others is directed towards the hall where the festival is being held in the three-day exhibition of equipment.

People from the TV and film industry who usually work behind the camera are milling around in front of the stands for Sony, Canon, Fujifilm, Lawo, Panasonic, JVC and Snell. These three days belong to them. They can now move to the other side of the camera and look at the front of the lens, which is now directed at them. These three magical days were set up for them alone. It is being held for the fourth time and is called the Golden Eye International Festival of TV and Movie Cameramen. This all started as follows…

On October 20-23, 2009, the first Golden Eye International Festival of Movie and TV Cameramen was held at the Amirani Cinema. The festival, which contained an educational program, aroused great interest both in Georgia and abroad.

An anniversary event and a photo exhibition was organized with the title "Aleksandre Dighmelov – 125" commemorating the 125th anniversary of the birth of Alexandre Dighmelov, one of the first cameramen, who was much respected.

The founder of the festival was Zurab Gegenava, founder of the company Innovator, and Giorgi Jajanidze was the initiator of the idea.

In this digital age, broadcasting equipment and modern technologies are of great importance. During the activities, planned within the festival framework, the participants are given the opportunity to learn about current trends in this field. This is important, because Georgia is still trying to find its place in the world film industry. The International Festival of Film and TV Cameramen aims to motivate cameramen and people working in TV and encourage their professional development. Various events and presentations are held within the framework of Golden Eye. The festival is visited every year by the representatives of leading hardware manufacturers, who conduct workshops and organize an exhibition of modern equipment. High standard international specialists from the cinema and TV sphere lead master classes and workshops for the festival guests. Open shows are held

to present the films selected through screening. The international jury screen and assess the works participating in the contest.

This year, reflecting the prestige of the festival, a total of 105 films took part from 29 countries: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Singapore, Serbia, Ukraine, Belgium, USA, Spain, Macedonia, Ethiopia, England, Moldova, Czech Republic, Italy, Portugal, Iran, Malaysia, Columbia, Croatia, Estonia, Denmark, Romania, India, Austria, Russia, Germany, Georgia/France, and Georgia/Italy. The jury at the first stage was comprised of the directors Otar Litanishvili, Maia Archvadze, and Zakaria Jorjadze, and they selected and presented to the international jury twelve films, which were nominated in four different categories. The international jury comprised Basa Potskhishvili - filmmaker (Jury Chairman), Georgia; John Henshall - GTC Vice President, United Kingdom; Hiro Narita American Society of Cinematographers – USA, and Max Mestroni – festival organizer, Italy. There winners were:

Best film cameraman – Jerzy Palacz ("Shirley"), Austria;

Best TV cameraman – Tony Costa ("The Blue Pencil"), Portugal;

Risky Shot – Martin Zaiarani / "Hany" /, Czech Republic. Martin also received the Grand Prix. As for the best student work, in this nomination the jury awarded the prize to the three novice cameramen:

Aleksandre Baev - /"Once Upon a Time"/, Georgia;

Serge Chiorescu /"Market Day"/, Moldova;

Vince Knight /"The Domestic Life of Molluscs"/, Great Britain.

A tradition of the festival is the annual award to an honoured cameraman who has contributed to the development of Georgian film and TV art. This year's honoured cameraman was Alexander Rekhviashvili. Special prizes for achievements in various fields were awarded to Zaza Shengelia, David Gujabidze, and George Kharebava. Tribute was also paid to George Beridze and other honoured cameramen who had passed away.

"This year the first international exhibition of broadcast equipment in Georgia was added to the festival. The exhibition had a great resonance. The world's leading companies had their own stands and introduced the latest technology to the audience. We can say that the festival and the exhibition was a great success!" – Nino Tabatadze, filmmaker and one of the festival organizers.

This year was really full of surprises for the festival participants. The company Innovator launched an audience lottery and drew two 500 GEL and 1000 GEL equipment vouchers and two Sony video cameras as prizes.

›› Davit Chikadze

Photo: Dato Tetrashvili, Ruslan Mamedov

Georgian Film is Your Visiting Card

Rome - Open City

"The city that never judges" – this saying of Federico Fellini's is perhaps the best reflection of the essential dignity and quality of freedom in this city.

Rome is an open city, open to everyone. Life here is seething in every street and in every square. For some it is sweet, but for others not so.

My business visit to Rome is more like a cinematic holiday – the eternal city, posters of Georgian films in the streets and the anticipation. Teatro Valle is getting ready to host a session of Georgian films.

Rome met me with rain and cloud. And it stays like this until the evening sessions which open Georgian Film Days.

So I start the journey on the streets of this city of cinema. The streets hold the history of Italian cinema, or on the contrary, Italian cinema holds stories of the streets of Rome.

In rainy Rome, it is as if time and space are mixed up.

The Spanish Steps. The famous steps are full of tourists – probably all, like me, imagining Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck.

The Trevi fountain makes the biggest impression in Rome – this confined space is opened by the 18th century Italian architectural masterpiece.

My guide through the streets of Rome is the actor Beka Elbakidze, who recently moved to Rome, where he continues his career. He tells me that the flow of the water in the fountain stopped only once, when Federico Fellini died.

The story is very touching. I immediately imagine the scene with Marcello and Sylvia and hear Nino Rota's music.

La Dolce Vita made the Trevi fountain one of the major tourist attractions in Rome.

Now the Italians are awaiting with anticipation the Georgian 'film attraction'.

My one-day wander through the streets of Rome has ended, as has my lyrical digression from the main theme.

Georgian Film Days in Rome

(February, March 2014)

The Georgian National Film Center, with the support of the Embassy of Georgia in Italy and the Ministry of Culture of Georgia, organized the Georgian Film Days in Rome where the audiences viewed successful Georgian films of recent times.

After each film screening, the Italians had the opportunity to meet and ask questions of the creators of the films as well as representatives from the Film Center. European film critics, directors and actors also attended the days of Georgian Cinema. The famous Swiss director, screenwriter and producer Carlo Hintermann was a moderator of the post-show discussions.

The great old theater, Teatro Valle Occupato, almost 300 years old and home to the music of Puccini, Rossini and Mozart, was now at the center of contemporary art.

Teatro Valle Occupato, the almost 300-year-old theatre with long traditions, where the music of Puccini, Rossini and Mozart was heard in times past, is today the Center of Contemporary Art. Young artists did not let the government alienate it. This venue occupied by European artists was given over to contemporary Georgian cinematography.

From the foyer to the hall there is a staircase depicting eternal slogans such as: NO RACISM, NO SEXISM, NO HOMOPHOBIA, NO VIOLENCE. The 2014 European summer of contemporary Georgian cinema starts from this point. The stage of the famous theatre turned into a cinema for five days.

It was conquered by the small force of contemporary Georgian cinema, which the influential magazine Variety called a 'new Georgian wave'.

The first show was held in Rome ten days prior to the arrival of the Film Cen-

ter delegation. Otar Iosseliani's Chantrapas was the film screened on the first day.

The director had already left by the time we got there. However, we could still feel the admiration of the Italian viewers even after a few days - they told us about the crowded cinema and the interesting meeting with the great director.

After Chantrapas, the cinema fans saw the multiple international award-winning film Long Light Days by Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross, which had a wide resonance. The story of the Georgian teenager girls from 1990s Georgia left no-one unmoved.

Day 3: Teatro Valle screened Rusudan Chkonia's film Keep Smiling, which was premiered at the Venice Film Festival. The audience did not hide their emotions and some were in tears.

The Rome public saw Giorgi Ovashvili's film The Other Bank for the second time – a couple of years ago the film won prizes at an Italian festival.

The director himself attended the Georgian Film Days in Rome. After the film screening, he told us that Italian audiences are particularly precious to him as they sense the emotional nuances very precisely.

The Georgian Film Days in Rome also contained an industry meeting with Italian filmmakers. The Italians were especially interested in the history of Georgian documentaries and the principles of the work of the Film Center.

Nana Janelidze, Director of the National Film Center, held a presentation where she expressed the view that the screening of Georgian films in Rome may lay the foundation for future Georgia-Italian co-productions.

The Film Days closed with Tina Gurchiani's documentary The Machine Which Makes Everything Disappear, a winner of the Grand Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. The audience saw Georgia and its harsh social reality laid bare. An incident occurred during the screening when before the end a distraught middle-aged woman could be heard objecting loudly in Georgian. Shortly afterwards, she walked out along with several other Georgians. In the foyer the distraught woman was constantly repeating "No, this is not our Georgia." Everything became clear. The woman turned out to have come to Italy many years ago to work. The environment and harsh social themes shown in Tina Gurchiani's film brought out a strong feeling of protest in the woman. I was upset but at the same time I was glad in my heart. The film aroused exactly those emotions that only real cinema can do – it was moving and it moved people strongly. This story has convinced me even more that Georgian cinema is alive, and the "new Georgian wave" is continuing the artistic traditions of Georgia. It was emotionally moving as much for the Italian audience as it was for Georgians. It moved the Georgian woman who did not want Europeans to see what it is really like in the homeland she had escape from.

I was covering the Georgian Film Days in Rome for the Imedi TV Company, and from the interviews I recorded I remember a comment by one actor especially well: 'I realize that the severe social issues reflected in these films are not your visiting card but the films definitely are.' I agreed with this and thought to myself that Georgian directors are making films on topics which are really not our visiting cards in order to have us reflect on our problems and think of ways to solve them.

C'est la vie. The main topic of modern Georgian films is not the sweet life, and the perception of Italians is emotionally precise.

The Georgian film said what it wanted to say to the open city – the city which will never judge; it seems that judgment is a Georgian speciality.

›› Ninia Akhvlediani

Viral "Free Film Screenings" in Georgia

Have you heard about Free Film Screenings, the project which was planned without any budget, expensive equipment or paid staff? The project which recruited ordinary citizens to allow them to contribute to the revival of the country's cultural life? Which brought together 14 and 15-year-old cinema fans from different regions of the country and proved that it is possible to make a success with "empty hands" if there is a strong will, a team with shared goals and the people to do it all for?

Gori, Telavi, Rustavi, Sagarejo, Batumi, Sighnaghi, Chiatura, Kutaisi, Mtskheta, Tsikhisdziri, Kobuleti, Tsnori, Ksani, Ureki, Dzalisi, Dvabzu, Leliani, Nukriani, Chinti, Kisiskhevi, Mukhrani, Shukruti, Zestaponi, Bakuriani, Dvabzu, Nasakirali, Shemokmedi, Vakijvari, Mziani, Zvani, Kharagauli, Khashuri, Samtredia, Tbilisi… Free screenings were held in all of these locations was a result of the enthusiasm of the project organizers and participants, the increasing interest of audiences and the efforts of the partner organizations.

The initiator of this regional project was the Ahuahu Foundation for Contemporary Culture, which cooperated with organizations such as the Regional Cinema Association, Civil Initiative, Women for Regional Development, Youth Club-Educated Generation, the Kobuleti Department of Youth Affairs, the Union of Georgian Filmmakers, Telavi and the Rustavi Centers for Democratic Development. The Georgian National Film Center gave moral support to all of this and to the noble purpose it served – activating cultural life in both the regions and the capital, setting up new film clubs and popularizing cinema as the most accessible mass art form.

The main principle of the project was to show good films using existing technical resources and leading discussions to ensure the success of the free screenings. The participants used their own apartments, courtyards, balconies, roofs, basements, fields, squares, gardens, offices of various organizations, library halls, sports halls, and even beauty shops… They screened films on walls, sheets, monitors of TV sets, personal computers, sometimes even laptops… There were shows where up to 20 people were watching one small monitor, for example, in the village of Ksani and there were also screenings where the whole town attended. The project had a special audience in the Tbilisi Cinema House, Catharsis, and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled People in Guria, where upon the request of grandparents, they saw relatively light, romantic films…

We initiated the idea in Gori at the closing ceremony of the National Film Center project Film at School. The Free Screenings project is a kind of continuation of the project Film at School and is logically linked with youth for cinema. You are probably curious how the project participants recalled and assessed the last few months as they gathered once again in the beginning of November to introduce new plans for the continuation of Free Screenings…

Mariam Giguashvili, Ksani
(Student at Cinema School)
"Everything started with the workshop in Tbilisi. We were introduced to the principles of management of the Film Club, searching for technical resources, and the popularization of the free screening. We learned that to organize a film screening it's not necessary to have a hall and expensive sound equipment. Instead, you just have to invite people and unite them around one film. This project is the first success in my life and I'm very proud of it."

Keti Gavva, Bakuriani
(Coordinator of the Cinema School)
For me, Free Screenings is a logical follow up to the project Film at School. Enthusiasts wanted to show a newly discovered 'other cinema' to their friends and they did this. After the information gained at the workshop we didn't find it difficult to cooperate with local authorities and organizations. They welcomed us with enthusiasm everywhere. They gave us a venue, the technical means, and helped to invite the audience…"

Dato Chikadze, Catharsis in Tbilisi
(Film School coordinator)
"I would never have believed that so many people would join and travel around the country, which really needs to relax and escape its everyday routine life. They say that a person is a book and an old person is a whole library. In this project I was honored to read the books of several (abandoned!) libraries…"

Tiko Suramelashvili, Tsikhisdziri settlement (Film School student)
"In Tsikhisdziri settlement we had three screenings a week. We wanted the population to see as many films as possible and discuss the problems raised. Several of us were organizers… My mother Tamriko Kasradze, who is our coordinator within the project, helped us as lot. The local government made the sports hall available for us… they also promised to get personal equipment for the film screenings in the nearest future."

Aleksandre Gabelia, Tbilisi
(Ilia State University student)
"My screenings were held in an apartment in Koniaki settlement. I wanted to introduce my friends to film classics and convince them that cinema is not just entertainment, but a tool to stand up to life's challenges. I believe this project initiates cultural change and refreshes our routine lives. Cinemas and film screenings are what young people in villages need to deepen their education and fight against the material existence."

Ana Urushadze, Tbilisi
(Organizer of free screenings at the Tbilisi Cinema House)
"My free screenings are held for families with many children and homeless children. The hall is full hall, it's free to attend, there's a happy audience… The children watch films with feverish enthusiasm, and after the sessions everybody stays in the hall to join in the discussions. Among them are future actors, directors and film critics."

Tornike Adamashvili, Tsnori
(Regional Cinema Association)
"The project proved that not only filmmakers are striving for the development of regional film clubs. It's impossible to always rely on small groups of enthusiasts. It's essential to encourage and retrain locally active citizens. I led the Free Screenings workshop together with Nana Bagalishvili (Theme: 'Fundraising for Free Screenings), Tea Gabidzashvili (Theme: 'Why Film Clubs?'), and Anuka Lomidze (Theme: 'With no Budget, from an Idea to the Free Screenings'). I think it was successful. Most importantly, there was a sense of unity that encouraged abandoned citizens from abandoned villages. Even little compliments make them happy.»

Natalia Mangoshvili, Chinti
(Film School student)
"My village Chinti, like most of the villages, lacks cultural events. The cinema where my parents' and grandparents' generations organized interesting events is now disused. This summer changed daily life for me and the villagers. Because we had no place to screen films, I decided to take a white sheet, borrow a projector from the school and organize the film screenings in the open air, in either mine or my friends' courtyards. The old generation recalled the tradition of going to cinema, while the new generation learned to do it…"

Each participant in Free Screenings manages their own club according to their individual principles, schedule and consideration of the themes relevant to the local residents. From this autumn until next summer the project will continue in a slightly different way.

Thank you to all the people and organizations who contributed to our project in any way, who support, encourage, and share the joy that is brought to us by every new screening, new audience and new discussion.

›› Anuka Lomidze

PRODUCTION OUTLOOK

Corn Island

A deserted island – wrapped in sunbeams, sunken in the twilight and mystery of night, surrounded with water. An island in a river. Although it is close to the bank, a boat is needed to get there and one day a wrinkled old man and his granddaughter, a freckled girl, row across to this isolated land.

The first thing the man starts to do as soon as he steps on the island is to taste the earth. Then he holds the mud in the hollow of his hand and crushes it to better feel its strength and physically become part of it. As he takes up a piece of the earth he sees someone's cigarette holder coming out with it. The water has brought it here from somewhere or somebody has left it here. It seems that somebody has already been here before.

This is the start of Giorgi Ovashvili's new film Corn Island (an international project which won the National Film Center competition). The project is funded by the following companies: Alamdary Film (Georgia), Arizona Productions (France), 42Film (Germany), Axman Production (Czech Republic), and Kazakhfilm (Kazakhstan). The screen writers are Nugzar Shataidze, Giorgi Ovashvili, and Roelof Jan Minneboo. The producers are Nino Devdariani, Guillaume de Seille, Nino Devdariani, Sain Gabdullin, Eike Goreczka, Christoph Kukula , George Ovashvili, and Karla Stojáková, the co-producer is Gabor Ferenczy.

The story in the film develops conventionally during the Abkhazia war, on a small island in the Enguri River in Abkhazia. The whole world revolves around the island, which is seen as the microcosm of the whole world. The water gives birth, creates, purifies and kills. (This island was specially constructed for the film in a Tkibuli reservoir and then removed. I will not say anything about the very difficult technical and physical work that this involved from Temur Albekioni and his technical team. Neither will I mention the harsh conditions in which the cast and crew had to work).

One day an old man (Ilias Salmin) and a girl (Mariam Buturishvili) row out to the island and bring life to this piece of land situated in a free zone in the middle of the water. First they build a hut from planks. They sow corn and care for it. They work. Quietly. Silently. The ritual of work demonstrates the shared existence of people and nature, and the harmonious relationship between humanity and the universe. Time seems to stand still here. The corn is slowly growing in the field. The cornfield is a metaphor for both new (even short-term) and ever-moving, changing life. Where do these strange islands come from and go to?

Like the change of seasons, when winter is followed by spring, life has islands of hopes and beliefs which appear and disappear in order to appear again. This is an eternal, continuous circle which nature and people pass through from birth to death. And they leave their trace. The trace of their existence. The corn island is a fragile, foundation-less, temporary, seasonal island, which appears and disappears, as everything in this world, in order to be born again.

The fertile soil brought down by the river from the Caucasus in springtime turns into the island on which farmers sow corn to harvest before it is flooded again in the autumn. The existence of this extremely liberated island, which transforms into a microcosm of the world, is as real a fact as the war in Abkhazia.

The film presents a concrete place and time, and the characters are an Abkhazian grandfather and granddaughter and a Georgian soldier (Irakli Samushia), who they give shelter to. There are also some other Georgians rowing around as well as Abkhazian soldiers passing by the island from time to time and thus evoking doubts and fear among its inhabitants. But despite these specific details – and this is one of the main lines of the film – Corn Island still goes beyond its specific subject and sphere to become a microcosm of the world.

The adventures of its characters are generalized into stories of any human being –during periods of war and peace, in the past and present, surrounded by violence and hostility. It is everywhere on Earth (which humans cannot divide among themselves and which in fact belongs to everyone!). Like a proverb, Corn Island has no time or geographical boundaries. At the same time, the river on the one hand divides and on the other hand connects Georgia to the part of it, Abkhazia, which has been torn away like the corn island. It is a border as well as a dividing line and a river of life which is possible to cross if people are willing to do so. But the test or temptation which real life sends to these people and which they handle with dignity as they make the choice between violence and love, hostility and tolerance, is the trial from which everybody has to emerge purified. The corn island gives

a name to everyone and everything. A forced union (which before was voluntary) is both a test for everyone (and for all of us anywhere in the world) and a chance for catharsis. Nature is fighting with the people and the people are fighting with nature. Both give birth to a new life, and neither can exist without the other. Nature creates the island for the man and nature takes it away after the man uses nature's creation. And if the man dies with the island, for sometimes it is necessary to make a sacrifice in the water, life still goes on. Nature makes a present for the man again – the land in middle of the water and he takes the gift as one who inherits a cloth doll which had been buried in the ground and hence survived. The doll belonged to the girl and was lost when, in order to rescue the girl from a sudden flood, the grandfather put her in the boat to leave the drowned island and which then took himself down to the bottom of the river together with the harvested and unharvested cobs of corn. And together with the soil which he worked and brought to life.

And still we do not know where the boat is heading – to save life or to end it. Will it escape the waves of the swollen river and get to the bank or vanish?… but whatever happens, one thing is inevitable – somebody will come again someday and sow the corn, look after the corn field because nothing effects the eternal circle of nature – not war, not death, not parting – because everything goes, everything has happened, and everything will happen. Only life is timeless. Even if it belongs to another. This is the law of myth.

Of course, the corn island is not the Promised Land. Nor a paradise. Nor a reliable shelter. But it is a little bit of everything and presents the people who have settled there with hope and faith. And it feels safe and relaxed until the war shakes its calm. Until the war becomes a part of life.

The island is also a model of what the earth and people can be like when the usual flow and order of their lives changes direction and the world is transforms. However, when one cycle ends, it returns to its usual rhythm because these changes never effect human dignity.

First of all it is the grandfather and the granddaughter who create this world. They give life to it. They give life to a young Georgian man, who in turn, can give the girl something new, a joy in life and fun.

As always, nature has its own laws. People also have their own moral and ethical laws which they will not break even in the most extreme situations when their personal safety is under risk.

The island on the border divides and connects everyone, the people who settle there, the people who pass by (who never break the rule banning the invasion of somebody else's world), and those who are being chased like an animal and find shelter there to survive.

There is almost no dialogue in the film. There are only short and essential remarks. Only internal emotion. Wordless looks that convey deep meaning and emotion. And quiet, wordless, silent, and reserved actions. No words are needed. Silence explains much more. Ioseb Bardanashvili's very spartan music has exact accentuation, which is heard only very rarely, and which only sometimes breaks the silence. The sounds and noises of nature are heard from near or from very far, from invisible space.

There are long pauses and "extended" shots (the cameraman is Elemer Ragalyi) with no special meaning and the effects are also very expressive.

There is a monotonous, silent landscape, the sense of the boundlessness of the space and the world's general image which is filled with the natural sources of light from the day and night and for lanterns.

And the audience, tense and full of anticipation, watch the quiet and calm landscape, which would be peaceful if it were not for the war somewhere nearby. But war is the war and when it comes, it is impossible to think about peace.

Then, when the world is covered by water, and strong muddy waves are washing away the soil which had just been in bloom when nothing can stop the elements, one more idea comes into Giorgi Ovashvili's film – a peculiar allegory of flood and myth which has no end.

P.S. As in the case of The Other Bank (which was awarded a number of prizes), Giorgi Ovashvili's Corn Island has begun to win awards at the international festivals (Karlovy Vary, Montpelier, San-Marino, Turin, Antalya, Anapa) and has won over the hearts of juries, media, critics and the audience. It has been predicted to have a triumphal future, and also, to put it mildly, earned a reputation of being "strange" and inadequate. As well as being ahead of it time, it can break through the boundaries and move from being a "politically grounded" (and not only) psychological drama into the realm of allegory. Which means that Giorgi Ovashvili's film hits the target in all directions and does not leave anybody – neither enemy nor friend – indifferent; neither those whom it is dedicated to and who understand its language, nor those who judge life from only one bank, who cannot see anything except one route and for whom Abkhazia, the human, kindness, forgiveness and clemency are only empty and meaningless words.

But first of all, everything proves that Giorgi Onashvili's island, unlike his Corn Island, is not at risk of being washed away. And this is the most important thing.

» Lela Ochiauri

New Georgian Cinema Searching for Reality

It seems to me that after a long break, Georgian cinema is getting back its interest for the surrounding reality and, most importantly, for the conditions that individuals live in.

If you observe recent Georgian films, you will easily notice what are perhaps slightly hesitant but still very interesting steps towards the deepening of the psychology of characters and a feeling for drama in everyday routine. This is interesting as this direction has always been a weak point of Georgian cinema. Even in its best years, Georgian cinematography reflected conflicts, problems and characters, but could not feel them all the way through.

Tinatin Kajrishvili's new film Brides is an important step in this direction. The choice of the theme is also noteworthy. In a country where in recent years there have been over three thousand prisoners, it has become normal to worry about them. But the burden and concern which their families and loved ones had to bear has rarely been the focus of society's concern.

Together with Davit Chubinishvili, Tinatin Kajrishvili decided to expose this subject, which had lain hidden under the shadow of "more important" problems. As she says, it was her personal experience that pushed her towards this decision. I do not know how accurately the director's personal experience was reflected in the film, but I was very happy to see that it did not become a narcissistic vehicle for sinking into a swirl of personal feelings and sharing them with others. Instead, it offers a very expressive artistic representation of the hidden corners of everyday life in our society.

The state recognizes only official relationships and if you want to be "accepted" and benefit from the limited chances given by the system, you must play by the rules of the system. This is how "brides" appear in prisons: the women register an official marriage with a prisoner, some of them already have a number of grandchildren, and one little, frightened girl seems to have made this hard decision in secret.

The main character Nutsa is among them. She is a young mother with two small children. Her husband has already served four years out of his ten-year sentence. During all this time the only method of communication with her loved

one are letters hidden from the guards and magazines in which Nutsa secretly underlines certain paragraphs and words to get her thoughts across to him.

But time passes. The rules of the system change: instead of secret letters in the laundries, there are now official face-to-face meetings. They are beyond screens, but still… and now they might allow unexpected 24-hour meetings… Feelings also change: a fast-beating heart caused by a phone call might be tinged with a sense of self-blame for the sudden explosion of passion. In between there is the everyday routine, and a burdening responsibility for the narrow bridge between this and that life.

With respect to the reality of Georgian cinema, the strengths of this film are not only what it contains but also what it does not contain, There are no false dialogues, no fake reactions and no unnecessary dramatization. Many things in the film have been left out. For example, the authors neglect to go into the financial side of the problems. They are more interested in the mental state of the character and its nuances. However, this does not mean that the story of the film develops in a vacuum (which is the feeling which has dominated in Georgian cinema over the last decade). Social existence is represented through the outfit of the characters, the gradations of behavior, and the visual details, which create at one glance a static but convincing atmosphere.

Such nuances in the film are very well handled. Every single character, even those of secondary importance is selected very carefully. In each of them you sense their personality, social status and even their back story. But I would especially single out Mari Kitia, who plays the role of Nutsa. She carries the psychological weight of the plot (of course together with Giorgi Maskharashvili, who plays the role of Goga, her husband). Also, she is very organic in every scene and interesting in every single shot. This does not often happen in Georgian cinema. Therefore, I can congratulate the film's creative group for their excellent casting, as well as the actress herself for her good role.

A big strength of the film in my opinion is that the authors did not find it necessary to present the prison as the subject of interest and the epicenter of evil, as a system of repression. The scenes in the prison are very balanced and not over-exaggerated. That is probably why the stingy signs: phrases, images, facture selected by the authors very accurately work even stronger on the background of this neutrality. This all creates an image of cold, indifferent mechanism and emphasizing this image would probably have destroyed the world of the film or driven it to another direction. Luckily, the authors have withstood the "honeypot" and thus, the film resulted in the human drama and not political statement.

Despite my overall positive impression of the film, I still have to say it seemed to me that the story has been sharply "pushed" in the desired direction. The birth of new feeling, then repentance and the return to the husband, looks slightly mechanical and hurried. I am not saying that this does not happen in real life, but it does not look convincing in the film. It is as if the authors were unable to fill in the gaps between the scenes and lacked nuance in reflecting the changing of feelings

However, the final episode of the film compensates for this small failure. The culminating scene of the date in prison is both painful and warmly romantic, although, in my opinion, it is too pure. Again, the focus is on the main characters and at the same time on the mood created by the overtones. And again, the parting is full of sadness and fear, not because the next meeting is too far away, but because nobody knows if it will take place at all, for nothing is clear and fixed, neither our own feelings and the future of the prisoners, nor the next decision by the system.

The authors cannot end the story. It just continues. It does not matter if it was a happy ending or a tragic full-stop; both would transform the film into another genre, presumably melodrama. Despite this, the authors found a perfect finale, which brings out the pain of the whole film. But let's talk about the finale (as well as other details) another time – the article might be published before the release of the film in Georgian cinemas, so I will try to take into consideration the interests of the audience and not go into the details now.

›› Manana Lekborashvili

New Chronicles of Tbilisi of the 90s and About Choice

In recent years, a succession of films have been made from different angles and viewpoints reflecting different historical events and their outcomes, which we can easily call a recent Georgian history. These events, for unknown reasons, had previously remained outside the scope of Georgian directors, even though logically they should have been a rich source of artistic inspiration.

I am referring to the events of the 1990s, such as the so-called Tbilisi or civil war, and the wars in Abkhazia, South Ossetia. However, I do not mean a literal reflection of the wars and battle scenes in artistic works. Instead, works should have portrayed the political and social events and processes which affected the physical and spiritual life of the country, influenced the internal state of people, especially the youth, and impacted on their future and even their existence.

The above-mentioned issues first entered Georgian cinema in 2005 with Levan Tutberidze's film "A Trip to Karabakh". This line continued in the films "Conflict Zone" by Vano Burduli, "The Other Side" by Giorgi Ovashvili, "Long Bright Days" by Nana Ekvtimishvili and Simon Gross, "Susa" by Rusudan Pirveli, "Born in Georgia" by Tamar Shavgulidze, "Keep Smiling" by Rusudan Chkonia, "The Tangerines" by Zaza Urushadze, etc. Such films on the one hand turned out to be the beginnings of a new Georgian cinema, and on the other hand- a manifestation of its international recognition.

Very recently a new film "Brother" by Teona Mghvdeladze-Grenade and Thierry Grenade has been added to this list. The film portrayed a fragment of society in the beginning of the 1990s from a new standpoint. Everything seems real in "Brother": people live exactly the same life that we lived in Tbilisi at that time. What happened internally and externally – in families and in the country at that that time – happens in the film too.

The film has a slow tempo, which on one hand shows the routine of everyday life, but is also contradictory to the events reflected in the film. These events are arranged in chronological order – the Tbilisi war, the war in Abkhazia, conflict in society and chaos spreading over the city and resonating through the universe with different forms and means. What is happening in the country is not just a mere background; it is closely related to each person's fate, the law of existence, personal development, and inner transformation. External processes strongly penetrate into every single family, every single personality, and every single soul, and they influence each person's fate.

Life tangles everyone in its knots and slowly and gradually spreads over the whole community. The place where the story develops and the stories themselves represent a micro-model of the world and unite everything that happened in the country; These are the stories which inspired the directors to make the film.

"Brother" consists of several crossing lines and stories. What they all have in common is an extreme situation which has become everyday routine – demonstrations, people walking with flags and megaphones, gunshots in the streets and conflicts between obscure gangs. There is no electricity, only poverty, fear, cold, death, illness and the pain caused by the loss of one's child…

At the centre of these events stands a story of two central characters, two brothers and their family. Seventeen-year-old Giorgi (Irakli Ramishvili), like many young people of the 1990s, is a victim of circumstances. Together with his friends, he begins to follow the new rules of existence. His younger brother Datuna (Zurab Tsirekidze), a musician, also becomes a victim of the new reality. After witnessing a murder in the street, his loses his connection with the outer world and he loses the ability to speak and play.

One line of the film follows his story as a pianist. This conveys how much the music means to him, how he plays (this is, in fact, the only musical layer in the film), how his elder brother buys a grand piano for him with the money he "borrowed", how he performs a concert, how he invites all his neighbors to the concert and how everyone celebrates his success. It is like a spark of a light in the darkness. After this the light is transformed into darkness again, before the light returns.

From every conventionality of reality the directors make a new, cinematographic conventionality, which determines the essence and structure of the whole film, as well as the manner of production and stylistics.

An old part of Tbilisi: the streets are almost empty and they are getting emptier and emptier. It is often dark and it is often raining. Although day follows night and the seasons follow each other, and despite the existing historical realities, the flow of the time is never perceived.

The area where the story develops is extremely limited. All the events, all the stories take place in one of the districts of Tbilisi, in a number of flats, in the same streets and in the same environment. However, this kind of setting makes the territorial, geographical dimensions more generalized. At the same time, it emphasizes the isolation of the community in the violent environment in which they are trapped, and they cannot escape from this closed space.

And in spite of the war in the country, which destroys everything both physically and spiritually, which makes people reject the familiar lifestyle and order, and instead transform themselves to adjust to the new reality and live like others live - in darkness and with the cold physically penetrating into people's bodies, they share joy and pain and give each other what time took away from them – kindness, love and warmth, devotion and dedication.

Datuna's trauma and escape from despair was the impulse for Giorgi to wake up and realize that everything loses its significance when it comes to a person's spiritual peace, future and life and when someone's spiritual peace, future, and life is in danger. He understands that life is beautiful only when you free yourself from a wrong course imposed on you and make a free choice to follow the path leading to the light.

›› Lela Ochiauri

Cinema – a Perilous Game

There is nothing original in starting filming with the idea of one shot, however, this first image is always very expressive and says a lot about the author's conception. The first shot might be as poetic and naive as a girl walking barefoot in the rain or a cyclist holding an umbrella. It can also be an ambiguous game, having both birth and death at the same time, the dangerous attraction of a boundless space like the inverted view of the setting sun.

This inverted world has its own rules, the main one being that there are no rules or that they are always changing. So sunset can be dawn, a voyeur can turn into the object spied on, a film director can become a film character or even a victim. Everything is dependent on what the camera is pointed at and who is holding it.

For Uta Beria, shooting the whole film with a hand-held camera is not only an original form, but a necessity which comes from his main artistic idea. The director of the project, which won the National Film Centre competition for short films, sees the logical link between the form and content of the film. A hand camera takes the film space closer to the real world. The last scene of the film is made in the style of a "reality show" as if we are watching live TV reporting. However, the image is more like a virtual, parallel world than a documentary.

They talk about the correct answer to the question: what is the main thing in cinema: what to film or how to film it? The correct answer is that the main thing in cinema is who is filming. In the case of "Ferris Wheel" it is a bit difficult to say who is the "who". The whole team, together and individually, worked in different positions. It was the first experience, or one of the first experiences, for most of the group. As they say, they had nothing to lose and they could easily take risks.

The film is not finished yet, although, as the material shows, the team have no creative complexes. The risk relates to the reuse of the oldest and the most overused myth of searching for a lost father.

The plot is a real antique tragedy, which develops at a seaside town. The main character Uta tries to find his father, who he has never seen and who he had believed to be dead. He finds his father, but does not dare to meet him since the man knows nothing about the existence of his son. Uta spies on him and films the whole process with a

hand-held camera. At the same time, a woman appears in his life and Uta's interests get split. Soon he discovers that the father is involved in trafficking. He and his partners notice the spying and think that the boy is collecting evidence. Uta does not get to tell his father the truth and the father kills the son.

The film is full of symbols, breakthrough themes and signs. The link between the generations has been cut –the father and the son do not know of each other's existence. The nickname of the father is "Trupi" (corpse). The distance between people is so big that not only communication but even breathing is impossible in this rough world - both father and son are ill with asthma and cannot breathe without medicine. The miscommunication leads to conflicts and tragedies - the father is Abkhazian by nationality, and he hides in a half-sunk ship with the name "Abkhazia".

Here love, joining with a second half, is impossible - Uta and the girl who enters his life are never seen together in one shot and the audience always see them separately.

And there is no end to this …

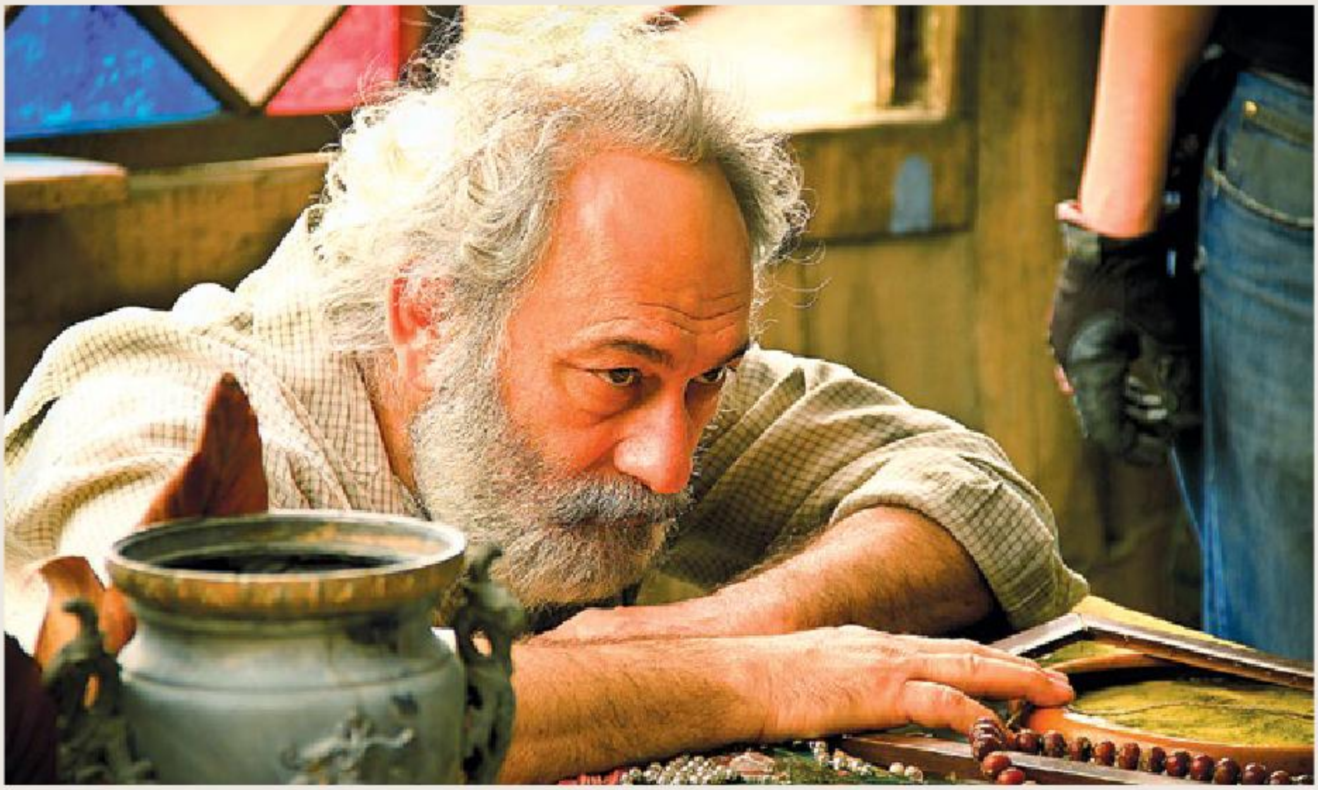
There is no episode, shot or cue without meaning, without it being a symbol or it being impossible not to generalize. However, the film director is not afraid of being serious, speaking about banal subjects, being annoying, playing a long intellectual ping pong with the audience. He is not afraid, because this is cinema. "Ferris Wheel" is a film about cinema (one version of the film's title was "Cinema").

The whole process of searching for a father is being filmed by the character himself. At some point the film becomes probably more important to him than the lost father. He experiences the pleasure of spying until he himself becomes the object of the spying. Subject and object here swap in a dramatic and postmodern irony.

In a sense, this is a "matryoshka"-like principle-based multi-layered film, where beyond the socially actual dramatic adventure there is an archaic universal myth full of symbolism. The symbols appear in the depths, when with the help of modern technologies, they start the investigating the rules for creating new worlds.

Uta Beria says that this principle is very convenient, for every viewer chooses at which point he wants to stop. However, the most experienced player should not forget that in Uta's films after a certain point the rules of the game begin to change.

›› Magda Anikashvili



Paradjanov

Sergei or Sergo Paradjanov, a Soviet film director of Armenian origin, was born in Tbilisi in 1924. His artistic life represents ethnic diversity. The maestro filmed his first major work Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors in Ukraine in 1964, which brought him international fame.

The feature film Paradjanov (2013) by Olena Fetisova and Serge Avedikian (who plays the main character) is a directing debut. The film concerns the director's life and the creations which made him a persona non grata in the Soviet Union. The story begins in Ukraine in the 1960s, the period when the director was working on his feature film Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors. The film also tells about his arrest and return to Tbilisi, where he shot a new film The Legend of Suram Fortress. His visit to Paris is the ending section of the film.

Serge Avedikian, who plays the main role in the film, really transforms himself into Paradjanov. However, I never imagined the artist's eccentric and scandalous personality to be so calm and modern. Modern in the sense that in the film there is no feeling of the atmosphere typical of the Soviet era. There are almost no scenes outside in the streets which might mirror not only the epoch but also its daily routine and characteristics. Thus, the film is even deluding - the environment is too artificial and false.

There are a lot of medium and close-up shots in the film and there is almost no general panorama. There are no mass scenes, for example Paradjanov in the rural market, Paradjanov on Rustaveli Avenue…

Although it is a debut work, I would still note that the film is unsatisfactory from the dramatic viewpoint. There is no anticipation at all and the story narrative is very formal. I realize that the article is critical, but when you make a biographical film about such a special artist and film director as Sergo Paradjanov, you must know Tbilisi and feel the main character in the film. You must bring Paradjanov to life in order to make the viewer believe in him, feel the environment and epoch in which he was born and where the artist's ideas and works breathed. The film fails to show such knowledge or the willingness of the directors to make such a work.

In short, this biographical film about the artist is a low budget "film", which is only of educational importance.

… And to portray Sergei Paradjanov as he really was is a difficult task.

Only maestros are capable of achieving this.

›› Nikoloz Gabedava

Outlines of a Portrait The Documentary Ramaz Chkhikvadze by Aleksandre Rekhviashvili

The "sixties generation" are people who created a whole epoch in Georgian art, whose creations brought up generations and whose names are associated with a brilliant period in the development of Georgian culture. Aleksandre Rekhviashvili and Ramaz Chkhikvadze represent this generation; two artists, a director and an actor of vivid individuality.

Aleksandre Rekhviashvili's artistic life, which has always been distinguished by its unique style and character, fell out of line with the general tendencies of Georgian cinema in the 1960-1980s. His artistic characteristics, such as thinking through visual imagery, an expressive range of complex symbols, construction of an allegorical environment, and an inclination for a documentary-chronicle style, were already evident in his earlier works in the 1980s. His film Approach can to some extent be regarded as a transitional work, in which the inclination for a realistic style can already already detected. It was a kind of a boundary separating his earlier films with allegorical forms such as Georgian Chronicles of the 19th Century, Antimoz Iverieli, and others from the recent documentary films.

In his documentaries, Aleksandre Rekhviashvili basically constructs the narrative through visual material. He refuses to adopt the widespread method of reading text out of shot, and when reconstructing real facts, he reveals his own position and attitude towards them. In all three films (The Lasts, Igor Sanovich, and Outlines for a Portrait), one person, one individual, is the central point.

The Lasts concerns the problem of migration from high mountainous regions. The life of two villages in Racha is a leftover from the Middle Ages, with a harsh social environment, no basic conditions for normal living, it evokes in the audience a sense of a past era. There is minimal use of text, the environment is outlined with sparse and, at first glance, simple lines and the daily relationships. Through emphasizing the daily elements, the shots create both a general atmosphere and the characteristics of every single character and their lives.

In this mosaic of diversity, the director highlights the superiority of tradition and faiths in Georgian life.

Igor Sanovich, Outline for a Portrait is the first work in the portrait genre. The director had to work directly with the character and this is why the film is more interesting and diverse in terms of opening up the character's inner world than Ramaz Chkhikvadze, which the director filmed after the actor died. Apparently, the materials in the various different archives did not allow him to see the character's inner nature in a new way and assess it. That is why the film Ramaz Chkhikvadze leaves the impression of being a second-hand approach to something that is already very familiar.

Ramaz Chkhikvadze was an actor with a wide range, who, together with Robert Sturua, created an entire era in the Rustaveli Theatre. The film begins with the ceremony of unveiling the "star" in front of the theatre. This ritual has been directly copied into Georgia from American culture, but nevertheless this becomes his profanation in a new reality. This is why for an actor who was gained the people's love and recognition a long time ago, this ritual turns into a final emotional celebration of his last benefit performance. This fact is of little importance for the director as well.

The plot of the film focuses on major stages in the artist's creative life: Qvarqvare, Caucasian Chalk Circle, Richard III, King Lear. Focusing on these four stage performances, the director tries to explain the reasons for the actor becoming a "star". He links the significant achievements of Ramaz Chkhikvadze to the work of Robert Sturua. The actor's relationship with this director gave Ramaz Chkhikvadze the possibility to use the character he played to talk with the audience about eternal topics such as tyranny, contemporary life, devotion, betrayal, etc., creating theatrical figures with various complex structures and a wide range of character transformations.

To create the complete portrait of the actor, Alexander Rekhviashvili's narration touches on the actor's totally different cinematic roles in films such as The Dragonfly, The Saplings, Melodies of Vera Quarter, Georgian Chronicles of the 19th Century, Entreaty, and Ashik Kerib, comparing them to the actor's theatrical roles and attempting to outline the new features of his talent. The manner of working in films is different. Especially in films where the actor is trying to create a character mask, a character symbol. Sometimes, his very free, expressive, laconic, unmannered portraits become like "frescos."

The family meetings and gatherings preserved in the personal archives emphasize the particular ability of Ramaz Chkhikvadze to live with theatre, his own profession, to be free and in real life to express his opinions to the country's rulers with some irony and humor as his characters do. He is a natural and organic part of every environment, every social context and with all types of people. It is these features of his nature that make him a great artist, and the director believes these features to be the most important.

In the final scenes of the film there is a portrait of Ramaz Chkhikvadze as an individual and as an artist by his friend. There is also the scene of his funeral and the applause of the grateful public in true recognition - bringing a sense of nostalgia and the ending of a great epoch.

›› Maia Levanidze

Total Psychosis

Hysteria and dysfunction should not be seen as exclusively Georgian phenomena… There will always be some part of the world where we can find some equivalent to accommodate this "senseless" reckless style of life in gambling houses, fast-sell techniques, or other one-off activities…

Konstantine (Mindia) Esadze's new feature-documentary film Total Psychosis does not claim to be studying the roots of the problem, although such an interesting understanding of the signs of modern society is very rare.

There is nothing criminal or illegal if people use a football championship or some other sporting competition to test their own luck, but what we see on the screen is a bit comical… Familiar faces of TV commentators are inviting the audience to bet. One of them is talking about the potential of some football club with an intonation which would better suit some decisive battle of a world war. They are nervous outside the studio, asserting their competence and at the same time looking very comical – this is kind of a game where people do not admit even to themselves that they are giving a sports competition, this very simplest of activities, a social, psychological and philosophical significance. However, they cannot achieve this either.

It might sound unpleasant, but even the hysteria which accompanies football in the west, despite its irritating factors, is still attractive for its showy effects. There is a lot negative in it too, but it does not really lose authenticity. Whether you want to or not, maybe you have to prove that you have to love sport (and express this affection aggressively). And if you have a love for football and if aggression is attached to the love of football, unfortunately this is due to natural factors and not to "necessity"...

In the beginning, it seemed to me that the world shown in Mindia Esadze's film is a kind of parody of that described above: in the gambling houses where hysteria and aggression find their ways in banal profanity, the strained faces with their blank look create a dynamic circle. The director manages to "characterize" his own characters with natural authenticity.

Greyish, lilac, dusk… The characters in the film are sitting in uncared-for interiors – very young people who sometimes wait with little binoculars for girls to appear on the roof to get a sun tan, so that they can watch, or sometimes argue about "measuring" something. The prospect of winning 110 GEL from a 20 GEL stake is the only color in a world where the balanced comedy aggravates even more the sense of human dysfunction.

The high quality cinematography and its themes, as well as the other domains of art, is free of speculation about giving ready suggestions about how people should live, etc. This comes through making personal decisions. But the reality which does not make a choice between good and bad functioning and does not acknowledge any physical or mental resources is very hard – and this is exactly what the hysterical world waiting for a football match is like…

I would not say that the title "Total Psychosis" covers the whole of Georgian reality, but if in all its forms we can generalize unnatural and false states, we see that Mindia Esadze's characters can be seen as people who have lost their purpose and are totally dependent on the results of casinos. It seems that they are full of emotional and physical resources but cannot achieve anything, even on

the level of basic relationships. Therefore, a character sitting on a decrepit roof and looking at the girls is a typical manifestation of disability, which is revealed in banal spying rather than the search for a real relationship. In such an environment even the young child of the main character seems to be an unusually balanced, discreet, thoughtful, and restrained human being.

In general, all this world with its monotony, worrisome existence, boring routine and wasted time, might not be seen by Mindia Esadze's characters to be as dull as the audience sees it, but this is only temporary. It does not seem accidental that the TV interior shown in the beginning of the film, the houses of the main characters, and also the noisy and neglected hall of the casino, or the underpass – are the only places where the characters actively move. All this adds one shared tonality in the prism of natural noises and general monotony…

And still, in spite of the interesting portrait narrative, the unbending portrayal of such situations cannot avoid a certain fragmentation: the audience sees sharp characteristic signs and waits for them to develop. It is not necessary to constantly feel a sharp, growing dramatic narrative, which is read in the existing environment itself, but it feels like the cinematographic completeness of the characters is not achieved. It is understandable that it is not that easy when the author applies a similar space, although the sense of fragmentation is still there. For example, the episode in which the main character, with nervous impatience, tries to manage the TV remote control, or the episode where the characters argue about betting and luck. Despite the efforts of moving from episode to episode, we cannot see the dramatic finale necessary for such episodes. In another case, it may not have been necessary, but the environment chosen by Mindia Esadze undoubtedly demands it. What the director is relating is one side of the "Total Psychosis" manifested in the hysteria of football betting. The second is the no less exciting social environment which we see on the screen. This is not a reality clothed in criminal obscurity or extreme poverty. This is a place for people with very few chances: poor, dull interiors, organizations with vague aims where even women try their chance of winning a few more lari. Therefore, their look is full of curiosity and expectation, mixed with fear. We see the contingent of bookmakers. This social reality illustrates quite well the interests and emotional background of one part of society.

"Total Psychosis" has a very interesting dramatic foundation, which can convey the characteristic signs of being a collective portrait of modern society.

The writer of the film does not artificially focus on a judgment of such existence and does not establish a clear position against this social reality, which should not be an aim of cinematography in general. However, questions naturally arise in the mind, such as: is this the rich world of human consciousness? However, in the end, such a lifestyle, resulting from either purposelessness or sometimes perhaps too heavy a burden of responsibility, cannot be our only feature. And if filmmakers are interested in some variety of this reality, it can only be a positive thing.

›› Ketevan Trapaidze

Parisian Dream Cemetery

There are a number of cities in the world where it would be interesting to go. However, any homo sapiens, regardless of which part of the world they are from – a charming, ordinary, or ugly place of the world – will be attracted to Paris and love it as much as children love Santa Claus when he brings them all sorts of sweets and presents wrapped in ribbons.

"Paris is like an ocean.
No line can plumb its depths."

George Varsimashvili's film City of Dreams (Particulier à Particulier) begins with this truthful remark by Honoré de Balzac. Georgian audiences had a chance to see the film at the 14th Tbilisi International Festival. The film is the director's first full-length work although Giorgi has touched on dreams before. He was awarded by Bronze Bear at the Festival of Nations (Ebensee, Austria) in 2011 for his short film Unrealizable Dream.

The film's main character is a young student Constance (Madeleine Pougatch), who dives into the Parisian ocean with great excitement and starts enjoying her dream come true. However, in the city where anything is allowed, it turns out not to be as easy to build a life as it is to walk around its pretty streets. Honest Constance, who generously gives out an abundance of smiles and thanks, forgets that "when in Rome do as the Romans do", for if you do not follow the rules of the game you will be thrown out of it. An ideal dormitory room of only about 12 sq. meters with a kitchen and toilet is what the players of the game are trying to win in Paris, through hard work and effort and the use of either their own or already tried-and-trusted tactics.

The situation is not really so strange, as for a student in Paris finding a room is as "easy" as finding a job in Georgia. First, filled with enthusiasm, you stand in a queue, then go through interview, fill in a form which will get put on top of a pile of other forms, and then full of hope wait for a phone call which might never come. In Paris, where everything is possible, you cannot succeed by only being polite and principled, and even a room with a "Turkish toilet" might remain just a dream.

Constance, who was astonished by the beauty and charm of the city views, is now flabbergasted by its perfidious nature. Here everything is for sale, everyone lies and cheats. This is "how it should be in Paris", "cheating is normal here", and everyone needs a room when life is expensive.

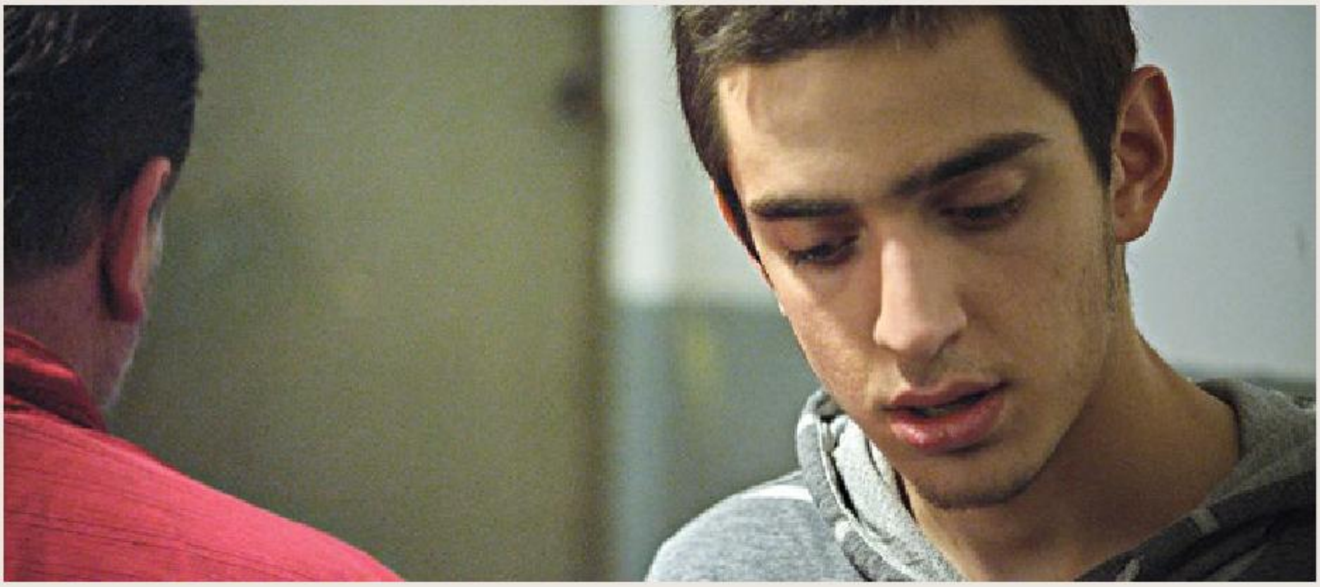
As a rule, directors will often choose Paris as a place for the development of a story and thus many of them make us eager to get there. Unlike them, Giorgi Varsimashvili portrays Paris not as a sweet, bohemian, magic and mysterious city wrapped in a romantic cover, but rather as a mean, deceitful, roguish and false place which is like a "cemetery of dreams". This is what it has turned into for Constance's sister who has experienced everything and now being one of the losers, she is full of aversion to Paris and tries to escape the city. Alas, the same fate is awaiting to Constance.

The director and Madeleine Pougatch, the actress playing the main role, have successfully handled the goal that they set. The film is interesting, rhythmic, light and not tiresome. The audience naturally and enthusiastically follows the story of a young girl and experiences everything together with her. She faces obstacles, gets disappointed and doesn't want to give up and bow to a reality which does not give her a chance of maintaining her dreams, but instead requires you to betray your own principles. Constance does not accept this and in frustration and despair she decides that there is no place for her in "the city of mad people" and that there is no solution she can find. However, this is a story about Constance and we might identify ourselves with the other characters. They are also not so difficult to comprehend and to tell the truth none of them lies. There is a beggar who finds it insulting to be offered a job for 10 Euros an hour; a street musician who pretends to be playing an instrument but actually entertains people by playing a recording; a cross-dressing illusionist who finds urinating and eating in the same room as normal as doing tricks; a blond girl who is not a prostitute but is just trying to get a room near her boyfriend; a black man who is using his skin color to attract the girls; and Giorgi Varsimashvili's character pretends that he doesn't speak the language in order to gain people's sympathy.

Despite everything, there is always a chance to change the situation. The director does not seem to be taking from us the hope of getting a place to live in Paris, but we should not forget the ironic details of life, such as the lost notebook which decided Constance's fate and took the chance away from her.

"This is my place!" – Constance is not letting anyone else have her seat on the train as she is leaving Paris – this is the place which she couldn't get in the "City of Dreams"

» Natia Tsitsrashvili



Student Cinema. Father

Today when Georgian film is gaining recognition not only at home but all over the world, and workshops, master classes and festivals are catering for the interests of young cinematographers, film students seem to be breathing in new life, constantly searching and analyzing. I often think how their demands, tastes and intellect have increased. Students assess any work and understand very well their friend's achievements and mistakes. They try to work to a high standard and with this aim they bring us many experimental productions. Their creative research brings interesting results. These works of quality by the younger generation need to be introduced to a wider audience: it is our responsibility to encourage such valuable efforts.

Davit Janelidze, Professor of Theatre and Cinema at the State University, initiated a nice trend: from their first year at the university, students in his film direction group do public examinations, which generates critical thinking and interest in the medium. For example, Vakho Jajanidze in his second year at the university gave a public presentation of his poignant film From Monday to Monday. The film is a significant work both in terms of its form and content. In this work we see an example of a personal vision finely illustrating the extreme challenges of human existence.

Frequently I watch students' films and find it very attractive when the core character is a young individual with unconventional opinions, a rebellious nature and a constant powerful striving for independence. Guram Bakradze's student film Father shows the author's reflection on just these themes. It concerns the life of a family which has in fact been destroyed as all the family members are lonely even though they share the same core problem. The father is the main character of the film (and is played very well by Davit Bakhtadze). He is neither a positive nor a negative character. He is just a lonely man, who is neither indifferent or uncaring nor cruel or unprincipled. But his age and social status simply do not allow him to express his protest.

The film tells the story of a teenager who the father rescues from prison after 9 months instead of the 15 years to which he was sentenced. The father is going to send him abroad because he is threatened by revenge. During the whole film, we see the ambiguous psychological state of the father. The narrative is based on pithy phrases, short scenes and pictorial findings and everything is accompanied by the rhythmic pulsations of breathing.

The dramatic use of the opening titles and their use in the editing (1.48 min)

is very interesting. Through the sound and movement of the red subtitles the audience get the feeling that they are in a car which is closing in on the car ahead and thus they are witnessing the story unfold in the other car. This movement is a premonition of the main thrust of the film. The episode in the car is cut swiftly to a close-up scene of the supper, which ends with the argument between the father and son. After these two expressive close-ups, the story develops through a rhythmic arrangement of episodes. Emotion disappears and the film moves as if into another dimension in a sequence of events from the past, or imagination, or even real events (free of emotions, psychologically indifferent and cold). The camera chooses the mode of spying (an analogy with the opening titles). We follow a sequence of episodes from the family story in which the father predominantly participates. This sequence is appealing for its academic and pictorial aesthetics (the artist is Mariam Chichiveishvili, the cameraman is Dimitri Dekanosidze). Every frame of the film is perfect in its composition, tonality, rhythm and structure. The rhythmic contribution of light and the camera movement is also remarkable (all works by D. Dekanosidze are distinguished by his innovative inventions). The father always wears a red shirt, a color which is emphasized in the opening titles as a psychological and dramatic signpost.

There are three characters in the film: the mother (Tamar Mamulashvili), the son (Daniel Adikashvili) and the father. The interaction of the family members is solely a physical one. I find the stylistic fineness of the substance of the film to be the work of the director. He knows what to say and why. This is why the audiovisual material of the film is dramatically convincing. This made me even more interested in him because very often the functional relationship between audio and visual aspects is not fully thought through in students' films.

It should be noted that the culture of the film sound track (Giorgi Gogoladze, sound director, Levan Maisuradze, composer) creates an organic synthesis with the visual representation. This film by Guram Bakradze (despite its reserved style, which might be seen by some as a weak point) is a clear example of a unique artistic signature. The film was supported by the companies Sarke Studio, Jaga Gripi, and Studio Phonograph, which has evidently had an impact on its quality.

›› Elisabed Eristavi

Where Does the "Seagull" Fly?

"Jonathan Seagull spent the rest of his days alone, but he flew
way out beyond the Far Cliffs. His one sorrow was not
solitude, it was that other gulls refused to believe the glory of
flight that awaited them; they refused to open their eyes and
see.

He learned more each day. He learned that a streamlined
high-speed dive could bring him to find the rare and tasty fish
that schooled ten feet below the surface of the ocean;

He learned to sleep in the air and learned more than he wanted to.

As Jonathan was gliding peacefully through his beloved sky the two gulls appeared. Without a word, Jonathan put them to his test, a test that no gull had ever passed. He twisted his wings, slowed to a single mile per hour above stall. The two radiant birds slowed with him, smoothly, locked in position. When they finished flying, Jonathan asked the guests who they were. "We're from your Flock, Jonathan. We are your brothers. We've come to take you higher, to take you home." First, our gull said that he couldn't fly too high but the two gulls convinced him that he could fly higher than he thought and Jonathan Livingston disappeared in endless space together with the two companions."

In the Tbilisi International Festival in December 2012, German director Stefan Tolz came to the film premiere of his own "Gaz 21 Volga". The Georgian audience saw the documentary "Full Speed Westward, Georgia in Search of its Future" by the German director. In April 2014 the film was launched in Georgian cinemas and Stefan Tolz's tour of Georgia and his thoughts about its past and future became known to a wider audience. The German director began this process of understanding 20 years ago, when he came to Georgia to study at the Theatrical University. At that time the country was still a Soviet republic. He has been living in Tbilisi ever since, and has learned the Georgian language and history. The depth of Stefan Tolz's analysis of the past and future of our country is enviable. It is enviable also because none of the documentaries by Georgian directors over the last 20 years have shown such a depth of understanding of the problems and the truth. I think we have been lucky with this film for when we believe that "Europe has gone and left us alone in Asia", a European teaches us and tells us history without any allegory or whitewash, and helps us to objectively see the truth with a third eye.

Stefan Tolz's "road movie" offers some new and unknown techniques. The dynamics of the 90-minute film do not allow us to relax. If you discover a

GKG-827

detail seen by Tolz in the very beginning of the film, it is difficult to relax for you keep looking for these details. And the discoveries come thick and fast: the SMK-707 is a car of the Metropolitan Kalistrate. I easily decrypted the abbreviation. Then you see a "housewarming" for the current Minister of Justice in the office of ex-minister Zurab Adeishvili. Here you attend the ceremony of "Icon substitution" and think how can these things, these figures, symbols brought (apparently) from various countries, be replaced with only icons?! Tolz describes the scene with hidden humor – is it not a deep and workable procedure for replacing internationalism with localism? And "Is Europe leaving and are we staying alone in Asia?"

The director's lens covers all the politically and socially significant events of the years 2011-2013. The events are also collected around one basic story: Georgia before elections and at the elections, a great oligarch's coming to power and the plan to leave it. Powers being controlled and directed and powers ruling; Bidzina Ivanishvili's government and the reforms which positively and negatively affected the future of our country; reflections on the new government by ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili and thoughts about the future of Georgia from the presidential residence by the Mtkvari river: "In Georgia everything must always move" – the future of a modernized Tbilisi and Batumi with a taste of Las Vegas – an "accelerated" Georgia and Soviet romanticism. However, the ex-president says that this is not Soviet romanticism at all and what people miss about the Soviet Union, in fact, is that they miss their youth when life was delightful and joyful. Now people cannot see their future and at the same time they are moving away from the past".

"This is cool
It reminds me of the smell of an old car
It reminds me of my childhood"

Bidzina Ivanishvili says. He liked Stefan Tolz's Soviet car.

"Is it good at maneuvers!"

Maneuvers are tricky things. They might bring quick success like businesses revived overnight by Bidzina Ivanishvili, or, vice versa, they might be truly fatal, like an incorrectly selected target. Thus, the problem of maneuvering should be added to the list of the main problems in our country.

"Volga Gaz 21" is Tolz's main character. The blue "Chaika" (a luxury Soviet car, the name means "seagull") on the one hand is a symbol of the mother's womb – an understanding of past, a return to the beginning, the Soviets; the symbol that takes our characters back to the past through smell, hearing, and their senses. On the other hand, it is a brakeless car-bird, a symbol of freedom thrown over by the Soviet reality, which helps the characters to become conscious of their own selves, their past and the unpromising future .

Stefan Tolz notes in one of the interviews that the Volga Gaz-21 car is the main character of the film, which everyone must be sitting in or at least talking about. Dato, a Volga car mechanic can understand the car. There was a time when "important people" used to go to his workshop, but everything has changed with time. Now only the German "Stefani" drops in sometimes to fix the problem with the brakes. And it's no accident – the Chaika flies right to the other side!

The people and society are stuck between Soviet romanticism and hopes for the future –this is something which characterizes all of them in equal measures: political and spiritual leaders, ministers, Dato, the Volga mechanic. Still, we all agree that we are heading off towards Europe, but the speed is important and the key thing is to be able to maneuver…

The road to Europe or the road to Europe via Russia?

"Speed shouldn't confuse us, we need the right 'riverbed'," says Bidzina Ivanishvili.

Tolz does not betray the course chosen for the film and wakes us up with one more reactive scene. We see what we least expected – characters from Lana Gogoberidze's film "When Almonds Blossomed", who are in a hurry with various ideas and speeds. If you speed up, it is inevitable you will meet a sticky end. It is notable that Stefan Tolz does not give up his neutral position and tries not to assess, but rather portray the events going on in Georgia. In exceptional cases, the director reflects on the events behind a mask of subtle humor.

The classic end of the film – the "society" gathered around the supra celebration table and singing about Georgia – "Beautiful Georgia, where can you find another Georgia . . ."

Result: Despite the diversity of the events, the image remains unchanged!

– I don't want to annoy an ex-president, who after nine years in charge left me with only colorful facades. Yes, Mr. Ex-President, "first you have to create the buildings and then the buildings have to create you". But does it not depend on what the buildings are like?

– I don't believe in an oligarch who became rich overnight!

– Yes, madam, I don't have the dreams that suit you – I will never put dreams in your backpack. Mine are enough.

– I don't believe in a country where fasting will sort out the demographic problems.

– I don't believe in a country where a man is afraid of going out because he's different!

Did Europe leave us forever and leave us alone in Asia…?

Where are you flying "Seagull"?!

›› Maka Kevlishvili

SPEC
CINE

CIAL
EMA

Auteur Cinema with National Colour – Tengiz Abuladze

All nations are proud of their artists. For Georgia such a man was the director Tengiz Abuladze, who brought intellectual and philosophical thought to Georgian cinema. As a great artist, Abuladze made a significant contribution to the development of European auteur cinema.

Auteur cinema is not a school in the literal meaning. Its essence is a free, unrestricted perception of the world created by a master with an original vision which is focused on an expression of individual faith. That is why the frames and clichés are destroyed, stereotypical values get discarded, and established customs are rooted out.

In the 1950s and 1960s, new waves appeared in various national cinemas: the "New Wave" in France, "Free Cinema" in England, "New German Cinema" in Germany, "American Independent Cinema" in America. The birth of auteur cinema in Europe is connected with the "New Wave". This term was first coined by the French film critic François Truffaut who extended it in the journal Cahier du Cinema in 1954.

An auteur film stands aside from religious, political or social clichés, the dominating taboos and imposed values. It does not recognize any restrictions or limitations. It is characterized by conveying naturalness, immediacy; it speaks the truth, discusses eternal themes and values, the problems of humanity, the essence of existence, gets into the inner space of a human being and the labyrinths of their souls. In addition, artists are free in the forms of expression; they are able to express themselves realistically as well as surreally and absurdly. The deeper the feeling of truth is, the more clearly the position of the author and the audience is expressed. Auteur cinema is characterized by poetry, the inner drama, emotion, feeling... based on reality it tells different moods, a fantasy, a dream or myth.

The great director Michelangelo Antonioni wrote: "The best way to learn and understand cinema is associated with the human ability to feel everything through their own experience."

Together with European artists, Tengiz Abuladze was one of the first to see the essence of existential problems in order to convey a person's inner world. In this regard, the film "Children of Others" is of great interest. The people in the film are linked not by a Socialist moral and sense of collectivism, but through the difficulty of existence and the fear for being left alone by themselves. The author was interested in the inner feelings and anxieties of individual people.

"I think that Abuladze achieves a new level in the study of human relations. The spiritual life of a man, his feelings and experiences open up new galaxies for us… And here too he gets closer to Antonioni… Fellini's mercurial talent, his fertile, sensitive world is close to him." (Margarita Kvasnetskaya, 2009.)

"The authorities saw the normal story of life in "Children of Others" as defiant," the director wrote in 1988. That is the beginning of Abuladze's auteur cinematography, which found its full expression in his future artistic works.

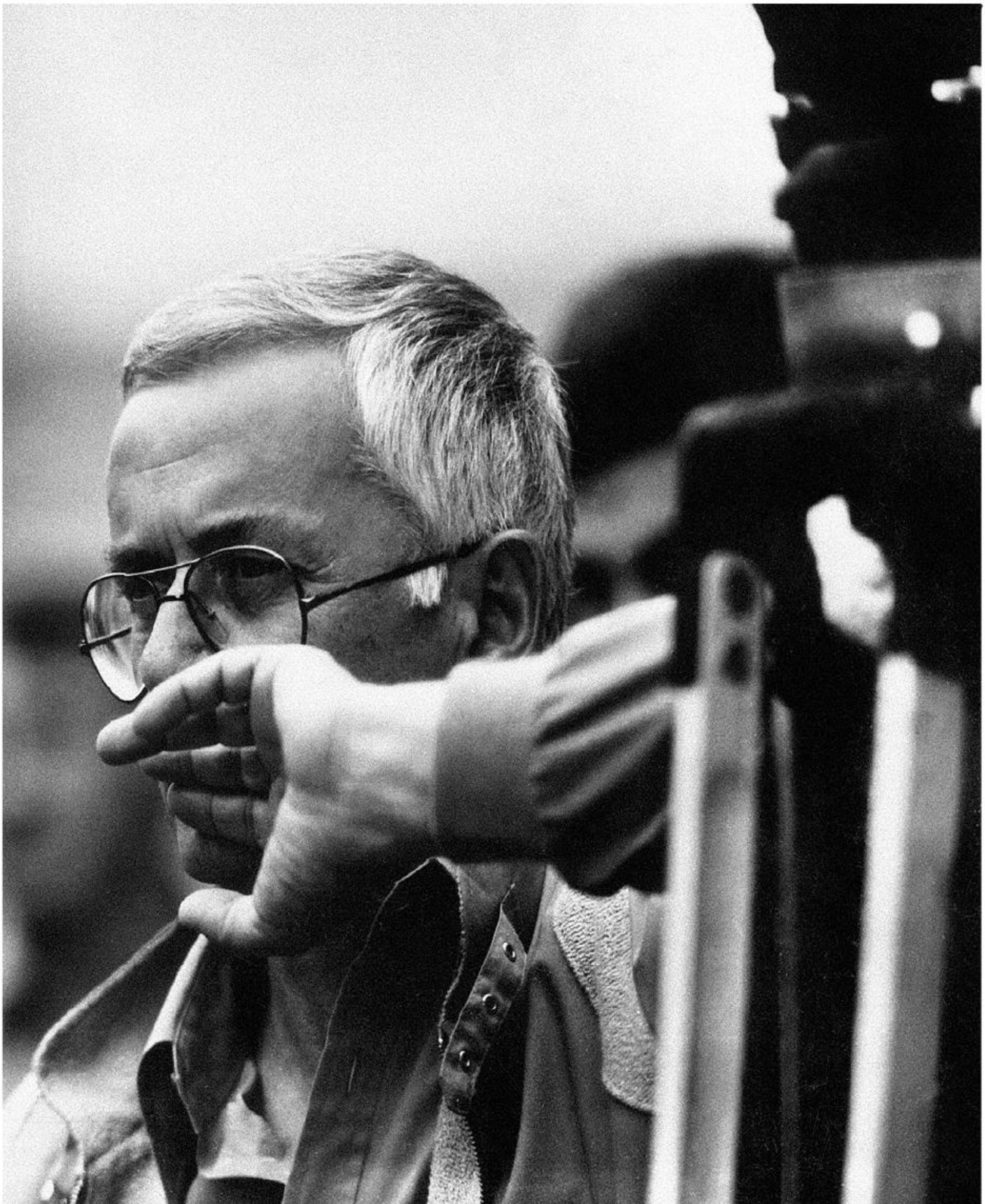


Photo: Rita Shengelia

Abuladze's Artistic World

Abuladze was distinguished among his contemporaries by his prevailing aesthetics, by a definite path of = personal freedom, and through this path he demonstrated the civil and the universal.

Abuladze's vision concerns the key issues of existence and he tries to artistically realize, reflect and display the most fundamental and most important characteristics of the 20th century world. The artist felt responsibility for everything that concerned people, for the spiritual world and culture. He sensed people's lives, their emotions, thoughts and fates, and set a spiritual and moral test for existence.

First feature film "Magdana's Donkey", which he made together with Rezo Chkheidze, was inspired by Italian neo-realism (the film received one of the main prizes in the 1956 Cannes Film Festival). The film deepens into a national character which has the ability to challenge injustice and lawlessness.

"...The social, moral, existential disasters of the 20th century make us concentrate our minds and our attention on the roots of existence and thought… People are not only in charge of their own freedom, but also the future of the world..." (Vladimer Bibler, 1991). Abuladze responded to this challenge in the form of an allegorical trilogy: "The Supplication" (1967), "The Wishing Tree" (1976) and "Repentance" (1984). In these films, which are based on different materials, the director examined his own philosophical views and continued his dialogue with humanity. Abuladze's thinking and vision is reflected in his pictures, phrases, and images which help us understand how a person lived in historical reality and what a human being is like. The conflict and tragedy of the film-trilogy is mirrored through the particular situations in the reality of the 20th century.

Goethe wrote: "To be a man means to be a fighter." Abuladze was such a fighter and the trilogy is proof of this. The film "The Supplication " portrays an artist and his fate in the same way as Ingmar Bergman – as the defender of creative people. Abuladze believed that an artist cannot be indifferent to what happens around him. This became one of the factors that led to the film "The Supplication".

The master examines the eternal, infinite, universal problems which concern people the most. He holds that high moral principles are essential for the world. Abuladze wrote: "Without high aspirations and ideals life loses its meaning. If a person lacks the desire to believe in goodness and to fight for grace, he is nothing." The artist asks the question of whether it is logical that evil exists? His trilogy is an exploration of the nature of evil and it tests humanity through evil… The birth of a force that can defeat evil, the search for the roots of superstition, outdated views and moral indifference.

Abuladze does not hide the fact that people sometimes make a choice in favor of evil – that is why sometimes the forces of good lose in his films. But it is clear that the world is based on those who choose goodness, those for whom moral principles are organic. Although in Abuladze's films sometimes evil wins in its battle with goodness, which makes the evil happy, this victory is reflected only in the external system, while in the system of higher measurement goodness ultimately wins out and confronts evil through its spiritual power.

For Abuladze the artist, the symbol of faith is always the same: "the beautiful

essence of our being cannot die." However, the director was not in a hurry to recognize the greatness of mankind, he considered his goal actually to commit to helping humanity strive for an ideal and achieve perfection. That is what he considers as the beautiful essence of humanity." "This is the artist's debate with himself, the philosophy built in a human's consciousness.

The Allegorical Form as Way of Thinking

Abuladze's allegory gave us "such a level of philosophical and moral reflection, which in certain ways still remains unattained," wrote Shemyakin (Andrei Shemyakin, 1994.).

Through combining poetry, prose and philosophy, Abuladze created his own allegorical form and style of narration. It is not only the external form. When going down into the depth of the essence of the world, philosophical discourse gains a special lyrical tone, poetic methods and metaphoric forms. It seems that he presents routine domestic problems as something very abstract and creates a kind of cinematic philosophical anthropology, through which he emphasizes the unity of man and the world. "I've always explored new forms," Abuladze said. "I wanted to know how poetry, philosophy, national character, eccentricity, conventionality and realism could be combined into one whole work" (Abuladze's archive). This direction choses the metaphor as the form of existence and narration in cinematography. A metaphor demands from an artist imagination, plastic thinking and poetic sensitivity, because the metaphor is based on complex, deep expressive forms and processes. How else to explain the diverse spirituality which cannot be recorded separately in any other way? Therefore, the cinema art that speaks about spiritual reality is mostly allegorical in form. This is not a complication of cinematic language, but its principal update.

In Abuladze's allegorical form not only is the emotional shock given to the audience important, but also its impact on the minds of the audience, who become mentally tense and fall into contemplation. He explores the whole of the personality, deep down to the hidden desires and thoughts. The director is interested in people's subconscious and in their unmotivated behavior. The main thing for him is to awaken people's spiritual impulses: "We must return faith to people, restore their disturbed harmony, which is simultaneously both formed and violated in the film. It gets destroyed. It gets destroyed in order to get restored again like a phoenix from the ashes… without faith, people lose their identities and turn into animals… a church for me is a symbol of faith and truth" (Tengiz Abuladze, 1992).

The director's characters are obsessed with looking for the essence of humanity and they find the essence in people's lives. In the trilogy, Aluda and Ghvtisia are presented as seekers after the truth ("The Supplication"). Aluda has to face up to the abuse of humanity and beauty. Ghvtisia is a poet seeking the truth. Elioz is also searching and striving for the infinite and hopes to find the "wishing gemstone" ("The Wishing Tree"), and Tornike ("Repentance") finds the denial of life to be a way of searching. At the same time, the lonely characters seeking after the truth become the defenders of beauty, who in the trilogy are the charming girl ("The Supplication") and the pure Marita ("The Wishing Tree").

Despite obstacles, in the trilogy the

truth finds its way through, overcoming the hardships. According to the author, the scheme is set up: The Wishing Tree – Repentance – The Supplication. While constructing the films according to this scheme, Abuladze specifies the ways of searching for the true ideals of humanity and its understanding. The trilogy turns into a cycle of the faith – we must believe in kindness and the power of beauty. Life loses its meaning without higher ideals and the striving for truth. To find the truth the director starts a dialogue with other grandmasters of auteur cinema. "The Wishing Tree" echoes Federico Fellini's films: "The Road", "Orchestra Rehearsal", and "Amarcord". "Repentance" has common themes and motifs with Luis Bunuel's "Viridiana", Andrey Tarkovsky's "The Sacrifice", and Ingmar Bergman's "The Serpent's Egg".

Abuladze believed in the harmony of universe, he did not question the value of a person and believed in a person's sacred rights and eternal nature. That is why his films evoke the desire in people to understand themselves (to ask themselves questions and look for answers). And the reflection of the diversity of life is a hymn to this life.

Aesthetic, Philosophical and Psychoanalytical Aspects in Abuladze's Films

Like the European masters, Tengiz Abuladze tells us tragic and comic stories in allegorical forms. His trilogy of films are tragic proverbs, while his "Necklace for my Beloved" (1971) is a comedy.

The films "The Supplication", "The Wishing Tree" and "Repentance" share a higher goal – to find and show us the meaning of eternal issues, a way towards finding the truth, goodness and beauty, fighting for these ideals, attaining them and again losing them in this complex and difficult journey. In order to recover the main idea of the film – the fight between good and evil – the director uses the category "tragic". To find the truth, the characters in the film face various manifestations of evil. The fate of some of them is tragic – they die, others survive and become the guardians of the good. The poet Ghvtisia, a character in "The Supplication", pleads with God not to kill his thirst for good deeds. He contemptuously confronts evil, the physical manifestation of foulness – Matsil, who firmly believes in his omnipotence. Matsil wants to offend the poet's ideal – a beautiful girl, to profane her purity and clarity, to oppress and humiliate goodness and the poet himself, who, in turn, responds to the evil. "While I am alive, nobody can harm me," the beautiful girl says to the poet. It is as if the chaos that reigns here is testing the principal value of a human being – morality.

In "The Wishing Tree", evil walks the earth, so the fate of beauty is tragic. The film's main idea is that the decomposition the beauty and harmony weakens a person in the battle against evil. Marita is a symbol of beauty. The final scene of malicious people throwing mud and turning into a mob reflects the violence which has itself turned into an attitude to life. Abuladze believed that beauty must survive in order to be transformed into the saving power itself. This is what the characters in the trilogy are striving for. In the film evil and goodness reveal themselves so clearly in the background of the true beauty of mankind that even the defeated and suppressed beauty celebrates.

In "Repentance" evil pours from every cleft, tending to corrupt, morally emptying and subduing his soul, turning

In “The Wishing Tree”, evil walks the earth, so the fate of beauty is tragic.

innocents into criminals. Evil puts on a pretense and plays with the audience, creating a masquerade, threatening, being hypocritical and sometimes cynical, while sometimes displaying a false tenderness. Real life is full of evil, of “ideas”, but its fate is tragic in the end.

The painter Sandro in the film does not sell the soul to the dictator and dies in prison. His fate, as well as that of his family and many other people, is tragic. The fate of the dictator’s family is also tragic. The younger generation, the dictator’s grandson is aware of the power of the wicked and evil and expresses his rebellion against evil and his parents’ lies through suicide. The tragedy in the trilogy helps viewers feel the historical era, its deeper layers and provides lessons for future.

“The Wishing Tree” raises existential problems such as fear and alienation. The director tries to make a moral judgment on every character. Everything around is full of the spirit of Tsitsikore, the village governor. He is the protector of the patriarchal era and customs, and their idealization leads him to inhuman behavior. Tsitsikore terrifies the villagers. “Woe my community and village! “ he says, and stands up against progress believing that things should remain as they always had been. The terrified characters seem not to understand each other, locking themselves away, isolated from the external world, and this is the tragedy of people’s miscommunication.

In “Repentance” the main issue is not the feeling of regret and the forgiveness of sins. Abuladze is close to Carl Jaspers’s opinion on undertaking crime, the metaphysical nature of sin, and a people’s imperfection. “I, the creator, am obliged to confess, repent for those who, in one way or another, are guilty… the biggest sin is fear. A scared human dies even if they survive physically. This is why repentance is a vital necessity for all of us” (G. Polskaya, 1987). The director shows how a man lives and in the ends reminds viewers that the street with the name of an evil person will not lead to the church – the church in the film is a symbol of spiritual strength.

To explore mental reality, to reveal the regularities of the human psyche, uncover the depths of the inner dramas and collisions – all of this is important not only for psychoanalysis, but also for film masters when they shape their characters and study the moral and ethical state of the modern human. They use the Freudian postulates of the subconscious. Abuladze, like Bergman, Fellini, Luis Bunuel and others, is based on the phenomenon of dreaming.

“Repentance” develops at the edge of the real and the unreal and dream plays an important role here. The film’s heroes, Sandro the artist and his wife Nino, are running to flee from an invisible enemy through narrow, dark underground corridors of. The riders wearing breastplates are followed by the dictator in an open car. Nino and Sandro are buried in the ground up to their necks. A peasant notices them and informs the riders. Varlam the dictator is standing and looking down at them with a triumphant smile. His eyes glisten happily through his pince-nez, and with fake theatrics he spreads his hands wide and begins to sing Manrico’s aria. The song sounds like eccentric, grotesque whooping. The characters’ dreams and visions fill their real life.

“Cinema is a mirror in which we become conscious of the depth of our essence and individuality” (S. Kudryavtsev, 2008.). To study the unknown depths

and to restore the dynamic integrity of aspects of the concrete human psyche through considering all its key aspects requires artistic interpretation. In this perspective, directors use the mirror and the "identity reflected in it" to uncover the mental reality of an individual.

Varlam decayed and had his "friends", including his son Abel, participate in crime. The embryo of conscience awakes in Abel and he suddenly realizes that it is necessary to repent. Holding a lit candle, Abel goes down to the old basement. He sees his father's greasy hands as they are slowly and laboriously cleaning fish. Varlam is hungrily devouring each piece. When Abel is confronted by repentance, the mirror reflects his double face. In front of this ruminant "master", Abel begins to repent and his face reflects his twofold face. "You are nothing but a coward!" Abel hears father's voice, "if it was the old days I know what I would have done. I would have thrown you into hell … did you come to the Devil to confess?"

Abel wakes up from this awful vision to find himself holding the skeleton of the fish…phantasmagoria? No, it is the reality of the truth: tyrants who plunder people's hopes, leave the descendants with a bare skeleton of dead dogmas and truths. Collective "Abels" brought up with this spiritual poison no longer deviate from the path of Cain. Nothing disappears without a trace and sooner or later, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren become responsible for the crimes of their fathers. The fish skeleton is a symbol of this collapse.

Abel is no longer what he used to be; painfully difficult changes begin in his personality. He has received all kinds of undeserved kindness and attained success, but self-confident Abel becomes nervous and aggressive. Fear of resonance shakes his cowardly soul. "What are the lives of one or two people, when it comes to the happiness of millions!" Abel says. However, he himself never thought of sacrificing his "happiness" for those millions of people. Only in a nightmare, in delirium, does he admit that his whole life was only deception, lies, meanness, and mercilessness. This is also what the "I" reflected in Abel's mirror says.

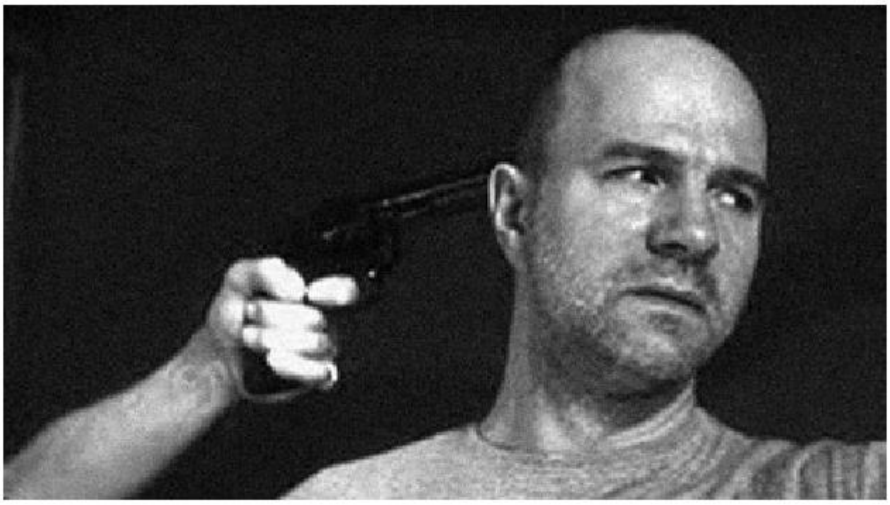
"The audience must become attuned to a certain wave of sensory perception… there is no true art without deep philosophical ideas. Everyone chooses their own films" (Michelangelo Antonioni). A true master's films are lessons for the future for every human being.

Tengiz Abuladze planned to make films which would continue to develop the thought and judgment of the world (Gunter Grass's, "The Rat" and Ilia Chavchavadze's "Is That a Man?"), but illness and sudden death in 1994, ended the artistic path of this great master of cinema. As a director-thinker, his artistic creations have greatly contributed to the development of philosophical film. Tengiz Abuladze's name will forever remain on the pedestal of world cinema.

From the magazine Sovremennaya Evropa No. 4, 2014 (October-December) Translated into Georgian by Tinatin Chavleshvili

» Soso Tughushi
(abbreviated publication)

Films that have not been made in Georgia



The heterogeneity of each pulse of the modern world always requires a new assessment. Cultural potential needs constant revision. Any innovation easily becomes established in Georgian public awareness. However, when we show this off for others to see, we forget the necessity of exploring the essence of the novelty. For example, humanity has firmly linked the eternal theme of human freedom to personal dignity, inner independence, and the concept of identity (also eternal). If we become interested in this side of Georgian reality, we will understand that while thinking about freedom, and most importantly, while reflecting on it, the theme of personal independence is rarely stressed. In fact, freedom of choice is not a simple concept. It begins by marking off the most intimate details of human life from society and exercises the right of full sovereignty over cultural and material interests. Let us take a careful look: Georgian society vigorously guards the interests of its group existence, but it does not show the desire to reflect the requirements of an individual person. We do not mean the projects, which are clear examples of how the devaluation of the real problems in our reality occurs. Violence, aggression, judgment of other people's intimate problems via the same spectrum and the same approach, is unfortunately a common phenomenon and has nothing in common with western openness and democracy in its direct form.

Illusion and reality have developed differently in Georgia. The events of the 1990s were signs of the beginning of a crisis which was threatening not only cinematic production but also the existence of diversity in cinematic thinking. It is understandable that the choice of themes typical for this period was a heavy one. Even more understandable are the consequences of all of this, such as challenges to cinematographic professionalism and many other causal events, which contributed to a shift of interest and a desire to have reality reflected in relatively favorable conditions. However, this does not mean that the number of directors who emigrated from Georgia in that period or in the first decade of the 21st century was very high.

The themes and motifs that have accumulated over the years never develop one-sidedly – Georgian cinema is one such example. Regardless of a lot of discussion of drug and crime issues, if it is relevant to any historical period, it means that the necessary precondition is there, as in any declared art form in any country. In this broad spectrum we do not see the stages when this or that generation found metaphorical and relevant equivalents to express themselves in cinema. We are interested in a particular aspect of attitudes towards reality: when will the fundamental understanding of individual freedom occur in modern human consciousness, and thus also in art (and consequently in the media)? Perhaps the wording sounds very severe, but Georgian "openness" (democracy, public openness, public awareness) deserves fundamental criticism for its snobbishness and primitivism.

Despite many informative and intuitive experiences, in order to understand the essence of freedom, we need to approach not ourselves, but the social space. And we do this in such a way that does not even invoke the natural impulse to protest, does not try to make a distinction between a personal, completely intimate, interest and what one is offered from someone next to you. The same trend is reflected in both TV and cinematic art. This problem is certainly not the only problem, but it is no less important than the well-known financial instability of art. In modern Georgia, an artist, for the purposes of multiple lay-

ers, tries to make everything concerning the character that interests him obey the general inertia of nihilism. They often do not reflect on the reasons which lead to the loss of personal identity. What is this if not the reflection of the resource for independence dormant in ourselves?

It sounds unusual, but an individual's self-search (again the eternal problem) is felt very spontaneously and, at the same time, with awareness of the conflict with society, in the films of those filmmakers who are no longer living in Georgia but are well acquainted with the way of life here and have no less feeling for this country. Gela and Temur Babluani, Aleko Tsabadze, Dito Tsintsadze – each of these creates different conceptual and expressively-shaped films. In connection with this interesting fact, we can clearly see the strong vision of the hero and personal independence as well as the desire – considering the individualism of the hero – to have the audience begin to understand the public-social problems and not vice versa; to have the hero become a seeker and "honorable defender" of his own desires and not vice versa; to let the hero decide whether to serve the community or not.

In recent works by the above-mentioned directors: "The Legacy" (Temur and Gela Babluani), "13" (Gela Babluani's directing debut), "The Promise" (Dito Tsintsadze), and "The Russian Triangle" (Aleko Tsabadze), we encounter a completely independent understanding not only of human beings, but also of this universe where people must express their protest against the stereotypical thinking of society.

Why are people's perceptions of their own rights changing rapidly and effectively in a positive direction when a cinematographer touches on different areas of action, even if this only happens periodically? If we conduct the superficial analysis, the thematic infantilism common to modern Georgian art might be seen as one of the reasons regardless of how active the space which an artist chose (or had to choose) at a particular time. This looks like a kind of naive peculiarity, characteristic of teenagers. He gets fully free from the complex of "spying" only when he is convinced for a certain period of time that he trusts his own desires. The debut film "13" by the young director Gela Babluani is far removed from the features of Western pseudo-reality, which unfortunately, we often come across in novice-debut films (not only in Georgian cinema).

The young hero gets into a half-mystical world from an ascetic, banal and uncomfortable life. Having come to work, he moves to the attic in one of the houses and learns the rules of a fatal-mystical game. However, the main dramatic factor is that he not only gets to know about, but also gets involved in that circle. He is drugged by the game with death and the deadly monotony of life with the psycho-emotional chain of logic. Fatalism is an important and ever-changing topic of art, but it is very difficult to create a small model of the world relevant to the topic. Gela Babluani's characters are seemingly ordinary people, as if they choose the abstract environment and fight with fate as with a real character. In the motifs of M. Lermontov, S. Zweig, A. Camus and many other writers, fatalism sounded as a force, as a passion, which has repeatedly revealed humanity's own face in the mirror. The same theme is frequently repeated in cinematography, as well as in fine art and theatre. But, it never loses its relevance and its variations are never boring.

Gela Babluani's conditional world is at the same time quite tangible: the loser characters, the tense and risky rhythm of life, the struggle for existence, it all looks so sparing in artistic effect that it is hard to

understand where this disobedient rhythm that characterizes the work of the young director comes from. This is one of the examples of a small-budget film which is devoid of any stimulating embellishments: there is no control achieved through dynamic editing nor are any unexpected details offered. But the realism itself is unexpected, and its incredibly dramatic setting holds together internally.

As so often happens in debut and low-budget films, a non-professional actor (Giorgi Babluani) plays the main role. Artistic functioning and improvisation on a given subject are considered to be the main skills of film actors. But throughout its existence, the film industry has allowed the importance of non-professional actors as a possible and justified artistic phenomenon. This practice requires a very cautious and clear conceptual goal from the writer.

In the film "13", apart from the clear dramatic concept, between the form and the idea we feel the harmonious convergence of the young author's true intuitive. The eternal and internal, even silent, anxiety of a fatalist is an organic part of the feelings of the young man, who is a captive of modern times. How does the essence of his discomfort get uncovered, and why is the main character so disturbingly quiet? Maybe this is a new, familiar to us, but unconscious rule of captivity that Gela Babluani see? The film characters look at each other with silent, tense looks and present to each other the rules of the game with death. The black and white film intensifies the feeling of the simplicity of life. Any character we see in the film is the captive of their own life, interests, fatalism. Desperate gamers and real fighters, human traffickers and simple life-seekers – each of them operates in the same vicious circle. This circle is conditional and at the same time general or real – a polygon of competition held in a remote place and a metaphor of life's cruelty.

It is strange, but such strong motifs are rarely heard in the works of the young director. It is especially strange because Gela Babluani's film bears no signs of pretentious generalization of conditionality. The space of generalization arises naturally. Associations and connections are also created naturally when the young protagonist involved in this dangerous game simply follows the war with inertia to survive, to make use of an ambiguous opportunity, to make a fundamental change in his own family life.

It seems that neither is it the motif of the inevitability of fate that unites the beginning and finale of the film. The simplicity of behavior, the mystification of the motivation for actions – none of this leaves the impression of being and end in itself. It seems that the young author offers a completely independent interpretation of the problem of individual freedom and solitude. Having come to Georgia for a short time, in one of his very reserved interviews Gela Babluani said that in this unpretentious attempt (meaning the film "13") he felt increasingly the process of the self-development of the theme more than the targeted, active and expected actions. We think that this is a pretty clear formulation of what we call the author's concept.

The form of relationships among the characters of the film is also changing rapidly and spontaneously: the smooth and hard nihilism, so common to Western youth cinematography (in especially strong colors, which was shown by the films presented at the Tbilisi Film Festival), gains new signs of protest and fatalism. These two, sometimes contradictory, notions are the background to one whole aspect of Gela Babluani's work. This is a simple example of the polyphonic sound that cinematographers wish for, or something which from time to time we call "seeing in one breath". Babluani's young hero faces quite a difficult task - his life has gone in two dimensions and both suggest a conflict between vanity and protest.

This is the Western world, however, and taking into account the unwritten laws of artistic generalization, the author never stresses this fact pointlessly. When speaking about loneliness we should not forget that this problem belongs to the history of art from the very beginning; we only observe its modification and peculiarity of perception. And the more humanity ages, the more interestingly and painfully the theme of solitude reverberates in human consciousness.

People are born and die with a tragic mark... There is nothing special, intellectual humanity has always managed to combat solitude through conscious or material means... The hero of the film "13" begins to associate the fatal mood with solitude through a spontaneous situation. In his last film "The Promise", director Dito Tsintsadze offers an interpretation of social context which is radically different to Georgian and Western consciousness. The story takes us to one of the refugee residential complexes by the Tbilisi Sea, as well as the apartment of a foreign diplomat. The meeting between Sasha, a teenage girl, and her involuntary patron starts with conflict, but soon the relationship grows into friendship. This relationship helps to understand Sasha's "wild" personality. And the audience obviously gets to share this feeling.

People leading immoral lives, Sasha's "friends", the foreigner's colleagues and his sexual partner, all do their best to end this relationship and make the man leave Georgia. In this conflict almost any method is acceptable: violence, blackmail, secret spying on nymphomania, etc. The authors of the film try to have us believe how unconditional and pure the foreigner's care for the girl is, and how interesting Sasha's attitude towards her patron is, and how free this relationship is from bad intentions. However, it may sound strange, but the artistic interpretation of this fine relationship cannot escape schematic, and occasionally forced, methods of expression.

For example, it is difficult for us to

understand and then genuinely reflect on the psychological depth of this relationship (which the authors claim), when the Georgian reality around Sasha and her patron contains only the signs of aggressive psychosis. Of course, this unfortunately really exists around us – its artistic generalization takes place from the position of an ambitious judge. The foreigner is blackmailed, blamed with underhand aims by the people who are using the homeless Sasha as an excuse to do all of this with an actively expressed aggression and villainous looks.

In the beginning of the film, the authors say that this story actually took place in the Georgian of today. There is nothing strange in this statement. Not only this level, but even a heavier level of brutality is common in the present reality. However, to adapt this reality into a film requires a cautious approach and the ability to generalize. By the way, the film "On the Edge", which is one of the early works by the director stands, out for its sincerity and the artistic conception of the problem. Let us remember one of the episodes of the film where Sasha's "friends", very aggressive young people, are asking for money from the foreigner in return for them not informing the officials of the relationship between him and Sasha. These people do this in the name of some unspecified "body". Actor George Gurgulia, with the emphasized mannerism typical for him (which, of course is the result of the aim set by the director), tries to persuade the foreigner that he does not have any choice. The story takes place in front of the main character's house. The aggression is obviously exaggerated. The foreigner's just indignation reminds one of remarks made by a citizen on the proscenium, while it should be repeated that such facts are neither unusual nor the result of the authors' imagination. The film is one of those which offer the motif of dual reality to the audience at the edge of social changes. This theme cannot be generalized solely in connection with Georgian reality for the motifs of self-interest and unequal social reality are universal, but it's conditional space is much narrower than in Babluani's film "13".

When we talked about the peculiarities of perception among directors who have emigrated from Georgia, we did not only mean sharpened negativism or on the contrary, the results of a biased nostalgia in their artistic work. We underlined the interesting, significant psychological metamorphosis which follows the liberation of an artist from the complex of being attached.

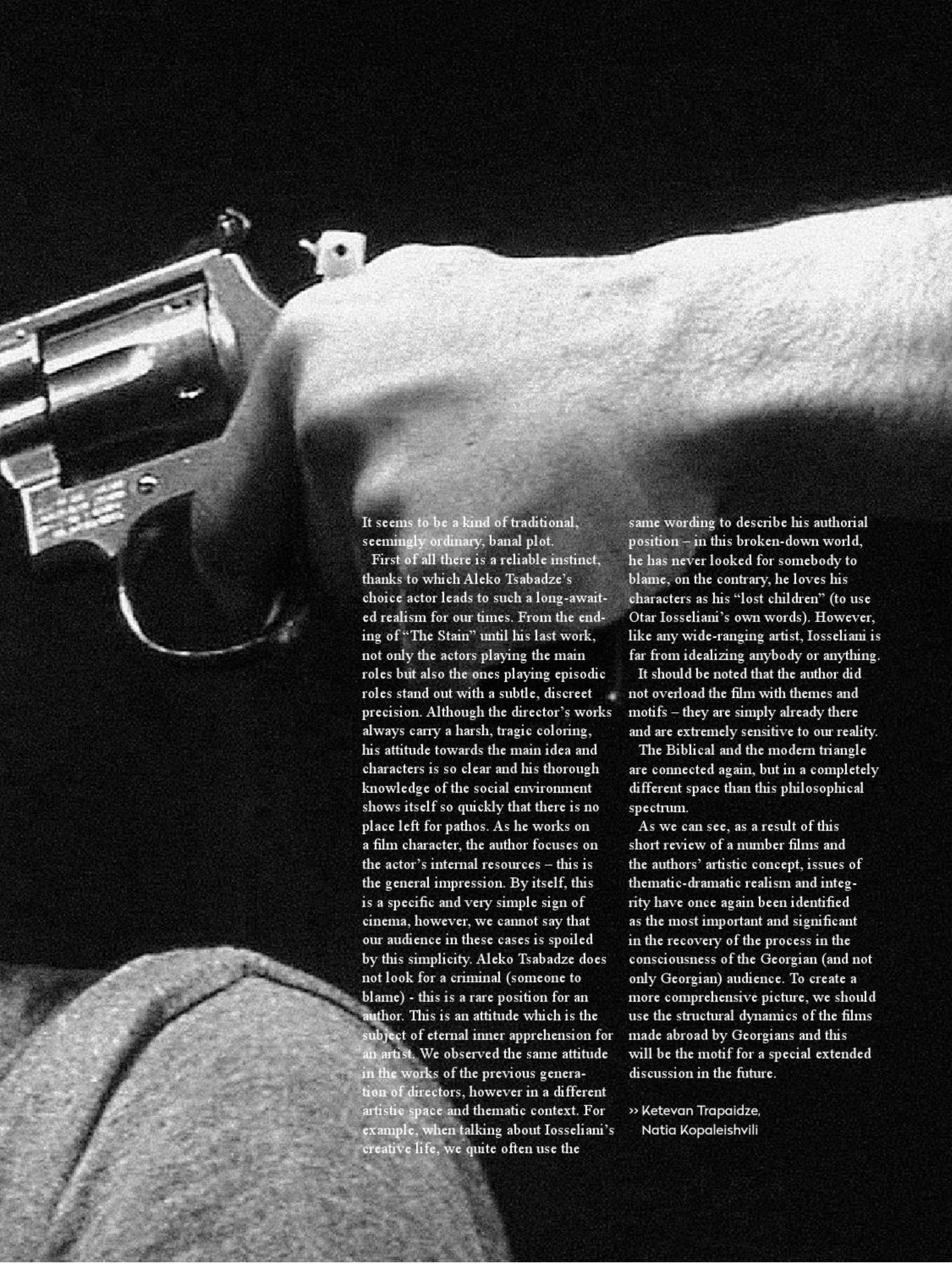
As we see, this process is truly heterogenic and finds many different methods of manifestation. The fact is a natural phenomenon. The majority of people working in art, as a rule, experience the tendencies which we discussed above.

Curiosity is such an important theme among the various aspects of a person's dignity that it creates the opportunity to extend any small or larger theme in the structure of an artistic work.

If an author acquires the relevant world outline and imaginative potential, then thinking in this direction is complex by nature, although we often encounter the opposite picture. Again, we will refer to Dito Tsintsadze's film. This time, the side events resulting from the artistic idea did not develop at all. The main characters seem to declare from time to time those heavy and painful problems, which truly are part of our reality.

In earlier works such as "The Guests" and "The Family", in addition to the themes common and relevant for Georgian society, Dito Tsintsadze paid great attention to the search for an artistic form. It is as though the artistic narrative in the form of the chronicles in the films "The Guests" and "The Family" with sluggish editing but interesting dramatic relationships, promised justification for the search mentioned above. But the film "The Promise", unfortunately, develops with a formally mannered, pretentious tone, which strengthens the disappointment in the lack of artistic shape and presentation of this painful subject.

It seems that the Georgian audience will never forget the resonance which Aleko Tsabadze's films evoked among aggressive and positive viewers. He was one of the first to manage to mirror reality with incredible truth, neutrality, convincing forms and at the same time mercilessly tell society what he thinks about the norms and stereotypes that society has established in our everyday lives. Therefore, after his debut with the feature film "The Stain" in the 1980s he became a target for the most primitive people "standing on guard for morality". His later film "The Night's Dance" was also condemned, although on a smaller scale. A part of the Georgian audience reacted to the harsh truth reflected in artistic form as if they were hearing of it for the first time and wondered why violence must be shown even if it really happens in real life. Why should the audience get disturbed by watching something which they never consider to be their own problem? This time Aleko Tsabadze has again chosen a harsh aspect of present day reality which can never be simple. "The Russian Triangle" is a film about the events that developed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, namely the hard fate of the new generation, the criminals and the victims of the tragedy in Chechnya. The simple triangle stupefies people into closed circle with the simple and non-aggressive cruelty, typical of Tsabadze. A young intern detective holds an inquiry into the case of an unknown killer, displaying great enthusiasm and patriotism, which, as he says, he was taught,. The killer takes revenge on everyone who has had even a connection with murder, the arms trade or treason in the war in Chechnya. The avenger is a Chechen citizen and former school teacher. He takes part in the betrayal of fighters and the tragedy of his own family. He is one of those who can turn from victim into merciless avenger. Both criminals and innocent people become victims of this disaster.



It seems to be a kind of traditional, seemingly ordinary, banal plot.

First of all there is a reliable instinct, thanks to which Aleko Tsabadze's choice actor leads to such a long-awaited realism for our times. From the ending of "The Stain" until his last work, not only the actors playing the main roles but also the ones playing episodic roles stand out with a subtle, discreet precision. Although the director's works always carry a harsh, tragic coloring, his attitude towards the main idea and characters is so clear and his thorough knowledge of the social environment shows itself so quickly that there is no place left for pathos. As he works on a film character, the author focuses on the actor's internal resources – this is the general impression. By itself, this is a specific and very simple sign of cinema, however, we cannot say that our audience in these cases is spoiled by this simplicity. Aleko Tsabadze does not look for a criminal (someone to blame) - this is a rare position for an author. This is an attitude which is the subject of eternal inner apprehension for an artist. We observed the same attitude in the works of the previous generation of directors, however in a different artistic space and thematic context. For example, when talking about Iosseliani's creative life, we quite often use the same wording to describe his authorial position – in this broken-down world, he has never looked for somebody to blame, on the contrary, he loves his characters as his "lost children" (to use Otar Iosseliani's own words). However, like any wide-ranging artist, Iosseliani is far from idealizing anybody or anything.

It should be noted that the author did not overload the film with themes and motifs – they are simply already there and are extremely sensitive to our reality.

The Biblical and the modern triangle are connected again, but in a completely different space than this philosophical spectrum.

As we can see, as a result of this short review of a number films and the authors' artistic concept, issues of thematic-dramatic realism and integrity have once again been identified as the most important and significant in the recovery of the process in the consciousness of the Georgian (and not only Georgian) audience. To create a more comprehensive picture, we should use the structural dynamics of the films made abroad by Georgians and this will be the motif for a special extended discussion in the future.

›› Ketevan Trapaidze,
Natia Kopaleishvili

Otar Iosseliani

Looking back 30 years later, I'm thinking about the impressions that Andrei Tarkovsky made on me. I can still clearly see and hear the scene when we all visited the director after the screening of Once Upon a Time There Was a Singing Blackbird. As we conversed, Andrei Tarkovsky said with great precision: "it's amazing that I find all your films very mysterious but when I watch them everything is so simple. It's Fantastic! How can you reveal every single detail and build a picture and create an image through such elusive elements. But you are a mathematician. Simplicity is your nature, but specificity of expression as well as the manner gives a unique shine to your films and to your soul. It must be very difficult to deal with this life, but you provide a power and support through your life and work. I hope that we don't lose ourselves. To me it's important to be honest to myself and to society. This is what concerns me most. There is a spot which society believes to be the right place for an artist. I would say that there is a classic place for an artist and this place was assigned to him in the renaissance era." This is the point where Otar Iosseliani's life and work is placed. He is one of the men who is very lives up to and is equal to his personality. Otar came to cinematography in the 1950s-60s. It was the time of a zenith for art accompanied by dramatic conflicts. He arrived young, strong and already grown up and remained so throughout his life. His work has never been affected by big movements or the various difficult stages of life. He emerged in cinematography in his 20s and it's astonishing where he could have got such maturity and wisdom from? Can we say that he was young? It feels like we can't. Is there any tiny influence of youthfulness in his early works? Did a young man make April? Favorites of the Moon? And Falling Leaves? Like all of us, he is a son of his homeland and time but he is such part of our cultural life that we can easily call him "a man of all times". He was speaking "the language of good will and care" (O. Mandelstam).

Then people appeared who put great efforts into trying to help Otar Iosse-

Photo: Vigen Vartanov

... In fact, Otar Iosseliani's artistic life is related not only to feature films but also to documentary films

liani "combat his own self and become a human." But personal freedom for Otar Iosseliani was internal and external freedom, fortified with true faith, and any imposition was felt as unbearable, physical pain. For a long time our spiritual lives would not be determined by the paths leading to them but by results. We were slowly developing a new vision, which we couldn't do before – to appreciate what we were indifferent to before. How surprising it is that even in this environment Otar Iosseliani achieved great success. It was success attained through people's love but still astonishing.

None of the directors of his or older generations have been so transformed, reborn, and idealized in people's perception as Otar Iosseliani.

Of course, there were different episodes; this talented man went through a lot of conflicts, stresses and life tests.

Iosseliani never bowed to the dominant ideology, never followed established formulas and stereotypes. Rather, he would touch on these, but maintain an essence of freedom as he was portraying them. Therefore, the complexity of the artist was not in his metaphorical layout or accuracy in rendering but in his outlook, which made the audience see the truth from their own perspective and understand the system from an unfamiliar standpoint.

...History transforms a person's appearance, but it hides something which determines a person's affiliation to humanity. Therefore, in every film by Otar Iosseliani a person's personal life depicts the condition of the universe. A person's conflict or protest against different circumstances, harshness, an individual's determination, self-judgment and anxiety – serves a spiritual awakening. For these reasons, a human being is telling you about the value of humaneness and the hard mission of carrying a cross.

I will note that every word you use to describe Iosseliani's films seems to be either inexact, either too ceremonial, or too humble. The same is the case with definitions. The film encyclopedia issued in 1986 mentions the merging of the director with "documentary aesthetics". The structural form of the film story, the principle of the selection of the cast according to the characters and other routine problems, speak about his skills of rendering reality. At first glance, everything is authentic, although every single definition needs to be discussed scrupulously as they all are as important as the definitions themselves...

... In fact, Otar Iosseliani's artistic life is related not only to feature films but also to documentary films. His feature films made on black and white tape give a feeling of free observation. The observer might get "tired" of observing this or that object, or relax, or see something completely different, and may get curious, or may look in the direction he is not supposed to, etc. etc.

...Otar Iosseliani draws his creative energy in a direction where he will not let reality be exhausted, in order to prevent truth turning into a copy, where truth can manifest its sustainability in the cinema, to portray slices of life and a natural manner of existence. Moreover, a place where he can discover what was unnoticed initially and what isn't essential for a permanent "observer" of life.

Thus it is not the fixation of existing reality, but the formation of cinematic truth and its creation with all its varieties, conflicts, and plentitude – this is the main determinant of Otar Iosseliani's poetics.

Such a method allows the artist to create a screen world without any mediators (neither literary, pictorial or any other). This makes him not only a guide (in the sense that on the way he faces disobedient, chaotic, transitional events which are just being born, as

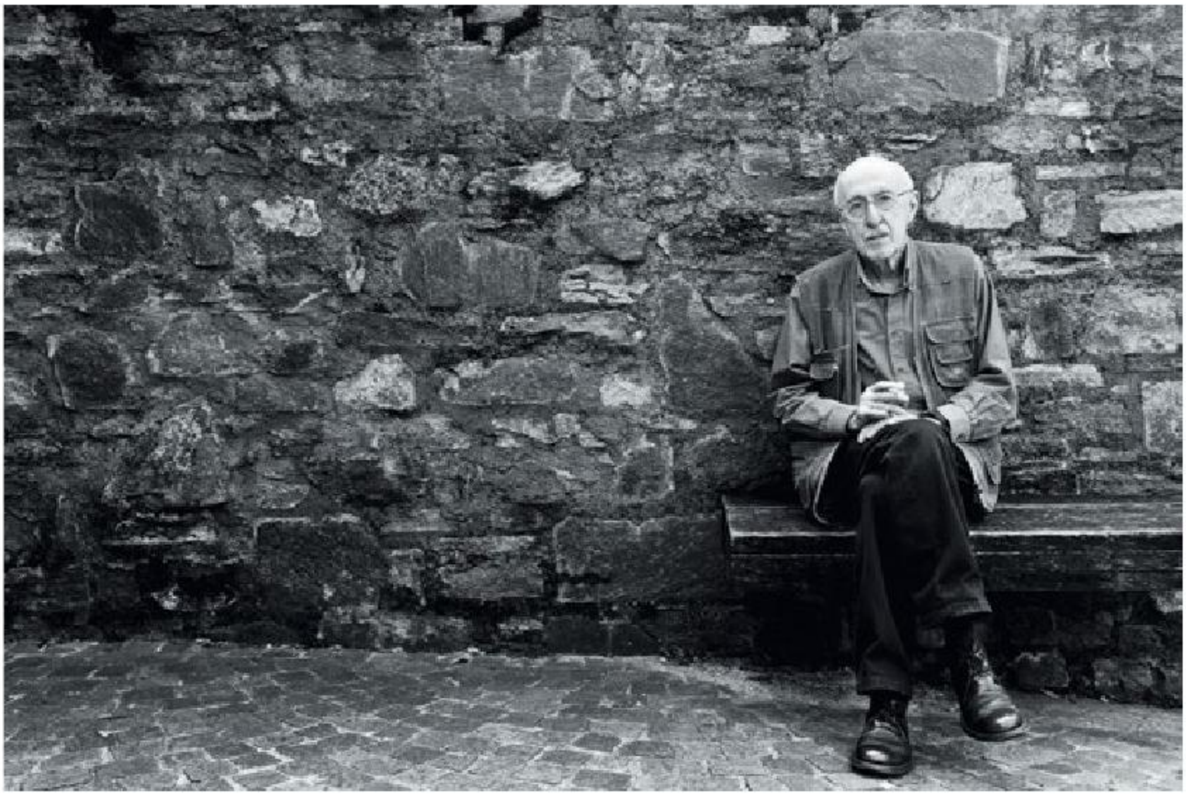


Photo: Lamara Kolkhidashvili, Alesio Pizikanella

The sound line of the film imitates the real noise of the modern sound world

well as other trends), but also a keeper of universal values which maintain their significance at any stage of life, regardless of historical opportunism, and in any social and political environment.

Cinematography for Otar Iosseliani is not a synthetic art in the sense that it collects and unifies the capacities of all known muses, but it is synthetic because it is a variable, ever-changing unity. It is a system drawn from reality, part of which strictly belongs to the incomprehensible or still uncreated priorities of screen realities produced by Otar Iosseliani (other domains of art are equal to other aspects such as the social and cultural aspects of life). Their hierarchical meaning is unknown. They shape themselves. Sound signals created through an effective narrative come from the reality which tests, checks, troubles and torments people. To put it more clearly, Iosseliani's art collects together the stereotypes that have been upset by life and consciousness. However, he uses them not just as undoubtedly valid but as things to be double-checked and tested (we should at least remember the exhortation about the importance of honest work which Gia Agladze hears. Such appeals can be heard by a person who people assign the role of being everybody's friend, who accept and share the happiness or unhappiness of others). (This is a fundamental of today's life).

Otar Iosseliani clearly shows the importance of this "lazy" man, especially his special mission that is so vital for others, and thus dramatic for "the singing blackbird". Gia's trouble is not that he has fulfilled the task he was given, but that he took the bait. A man can find his own mission himself in this life. This is the essence of the questions asked by the artist…

... The director's working method is especially noteworthy. It is interesting that Otar Iosseliani does not really consider other people's initiatives. He does not consider the possibility that somebody from the crew will become a leader. He is not the type of person who earns admiration for "collective work". He needs unconditional supporters, who trust his strategy and tactics and fulfill the given assignments. He is competent in all domains of cinematography, he does not only initiate ideas and conduct them, but if needed, he is ready to do everything himself and provide the author's interpretation for the realization of the idea…

… It is interesting to discuss the soundtracks of Iosseliani's films. The intonation of the dialogues, the variety of musical fragments, the importance of the sound – all these create a flexible sound fabric which provides an "accompaniment to the image" in the way the author wants. On the other hand, this somewhat hinders the autonomy and independence of the director. The effect of immediacy creates a strict order of sound elements, their mutual attraction and repulsion.

The sound line of the film imitates the real noise of the modern sound world. All of this has its strictly assigned place in this sound score, but it easily gives its position to the primary soundtrack and allows an almost inaudible melody to be heard. By ignoring these recommendations, the director allowed himself to freely choose the sound material (splitting a musical fragment, motivating the emergence of the soundtrack and, vice versa, turning a musical narrative into a puzzle, merging unmotivated musical works of different types and linking them through different principles). An artist never strives for the creation of one whole musical work which would have an independent artistic value without the specific film or which would be performed at a concert as a musical composition. However, at the same time he necessarily sees (or more accurately hears) that the selection of musical sound is a fundamental part of the overall cinematic composition.

›› Rusudan Tikanadze

Photo: Niko Tarielashvili

Georgian films retrospection in MoMA

In 1988, at a 'supra' (Georgian feast) in a small Georgian village the only woman was Danish film-curator Jytte Jensen. Her hosts were treating her with special care and offering her all kinds of dishes. The men made her dizzy with toasts and kissing her hands. Before she was introduced to Georgian hospitality, she had flown from Moscow to Tbilisi on an overcrowded plane, which apart from people was full of chickens and turkeys. Today Jytte is recalling her first visit to Georgia with humor and a bit of nostalgia as we are talking at the office of the Modern Art Museum (MoMA) in New York. The Georgian cinema retrospective project, which she has been working on for over 20 years, successfully opened in MoMA's cinema halls on 23rd September, 2014.

During recent years, many film experts and amateurs in the world film festival circles have begun talking about modern Georgian films. Young Georgian directors have been awarded various prizes and their works have been discussed and publicized in the American and European film press. It is symbolic that MoMA's retrospective – the largest ever retrospective of Georgian cinema in the USA – became possible in the light of recent events.

The retrospective Discovering Georgian Cinema is a joint project of California University, Berkley Art College, Pacific Film Archive and the film department of The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). It comprises two parts, which were given thematic titles by the curators. The first part, Family Affair, is dedicated to a distinguishing feature of Georgian cinematography – the blood connections in Georgian film production. Since 1920 until today, there are three generations of Georgian families represented in the cinema. We mean directors and actors such as: Nato Vachnadze and Nikoloz Shengelaia, and their sons Giorgi and Eldar Shengelaia; the Babluani family: Temur, Gela, Sopo and Giorgi Babluani; Nutsa Ghoghoberidze, the first female Georgian director who remained unnoticed in history, and her daughter and granddaughter Lana Ghoghoberidze and Salome Aleksi-Ghoghoberidze. As you know, the programming of any retrospective involves some unique and innovative packaging and marketing. According to the curators, cinema as a family business is of one of the unifying features, distinguishing Georgian cinema from other cinemas.

Part 2: Blue Mountains and Beyond was inspired by the closeness to nature, its significance and special care for the beauty of the shot, which is given a great deal of attention in Georgian films. This is one of the reasons why Jytte Jensen fell in love with Georgian films. She notes that some films clearly show a contrast between the wisdom of simple village people and the false values of others who have recently moved to a city. Jytte distinguishes other peculiarities: the Georgian humor, which bewitched her right from the very beginning, the judgment on bureaucracy, reasonable methods of avoiding censorship, the revival of historical persons and events on screen, and the adjustment to modern times. And finally, Jytte says that from the very beginning, Georgia has had an auteur cinema which has always been popular here - this is very difficult and rarely happens.

The retrospective consists of 45 films

MOMA FILM

and 90 presentations and covers all the periods: classic works from the silent era (films by Ivane Perestiani, Nikoloz Shengelaia and Mikheil Kalatozov); early sound movies and the achievements of Soviet times (Otar Iosseliani, Giorgi Shengelaia, Tengiz Abuladze); works from the 1980s and early post-Soviet times (Lana Ghoghoberidze, Eldar Shengelaia, Temur Babluani); and of course, modern films. According to the official program of the museum, the purpose of the presentations in this section is "to portray the distinguished aesthetics and sophisticated style of Georgian film production from the very beginning until the promising recent new wave represented by the abundance of talented filmmakers such as Levan Koghuashvili, Salome Aleksi-Ghoghoberidze, Gela Babluani and Tinatin Gurchiani." It should be noted that the recent works by Georgian directors have called a New Wave abroad on several occasions, and the term Georgian New Wave is emphasized in bold by MoMA and is being officially established among international film experts.

However, we should note that the retrospective was not only the result of the recent achievements of Georgian cinema and it was not that easy to organize it as people might think.

Jytte heard of Georgia for the first time at the Moscow Film Festival in 1986 when she was told by George Gandy, a member of the supervisory board of Pacific Film Archives, that he was travelling to Georgia together with his friend Bob. Mr. Gandy had travelled all over the world in the search for good cinema and he had become especially fond of Georgian films. His friend Bob turned out to be the actor Robert Redford and they both visited Tbilisi, where they also met Eldar Shengelaia. Due to his affection for Georgian films, Gandy hosted many Georgian directors at Pacific Film Archives during Soviet times. To save their film reels, many people left them there so that in case there was a demand to see the films abroad, they could be posted. Otherwise, it might have been a problem, as it usually was in Soviet times. As a result, 20 films out of the 45 presented at the retrospectives were obtained from these archives.

In 1991, MoMA announced that together with the Pacific Film Archives they would organize the retrospectives of Georgian cinema. MoMA's curators normally need 4-5 years to prepare such a large-scale project. As Jytte now recalls, the main obstacle at that time was not lack of money or interest (12 organizations supported the project). The main problem was that most of the films by Georgian directors were kept at Mosfilm in Moscow after the Soviet Union collapsed. The Georgian side tried to get the films back to Georgia. MoMA did not want to go against the wishes of the Georgians and get the copies from Moscow especially when the political situation was so acute. The reels never got back to Georgia. The films shown in the program will stay in the permanent collection of the MoMA museum and various organizations all over the world will have the possibility to borrow and screen them.

I had a chance to work with Jytte in New York during the final year of the preparation of the retrospective, and to keep eye on the process of film selection. The initiators of the retrospective are Americans and so Jytte presents their vision of Georgian cinematography. However, the curators were interested in the views and attitudes towards the films in Georgia, and they asked questions of me and Sopo Babluani (who also was in New York and was involved in the process). For example, Jytte was interested in films which both parents and children watch with equal pleasure. Also, how was this or that film received by society at that time and which films out of those they had not seen would we advise them to watch. Sometimes their opinion would coincide with the opinion of Georgians, sometimes it did not.

Many people talk about the international importance of this retrospective of Georgian cinema. New York is a multinational metropolis where audience of all tastes can be found. It is considered to be the center of American independent cinema. MoMA's film department, with the largest collection of international films, is a distributor of most significant auteur films. Of course, this will help provide the international audience with information about the traditions of Georgian cinema. This will build the basis for new Georgian films in the future to become established in the minds not only of film experts but also among cinema fans. This might be very important for the representatives of young Georgian cinema. Today, when they are involved in the process of establishing a new Georgian cinema, it is very important to give them opportunities to continue the line of development of Georgian film production. A retrospective revives on the screen historical films that have been hardly available not only to ordinary audiences but also to film department students. (All this is hindered by the fact that many film reels are not in Georgia or are in very bad condition, and a lot of money is needed to scan them and make digital copies). Today, when most of the authors of modern Georgian films represented in the retrospective have received their education at cinema schools abroad, where they learn the history of cinema of other countries, it is even more important to fully remember the traditions of Georgian cinema, to see them from new perspectives, and analyze and compare them with world cinematography.

›› Nino Chichua

"I'm a little Georgian" – A Breakthrough into a Closed-off Area

In recent years Georgian audiences have not been spoiled with high quality films. What could be the reason for this: taste, technical means, resources or ideas? However, everything is not as bad as it seems at first glance from a distance.

To give us hope, one year ago a documentary film studio was established which offers the audience interesting documentaries. On its first anniversary it achieved a great success. In 2014, "I'm a Little Georgian" (Dir. Levan Adamia, authors: Manana Khidasheli, Zaza Jgharkava) was announced as the best documentary work at the Prix CIRCOM 2014 in Croatia. We visited the studio to congratulate them and talk about the cinema industry in Georgia.

"I'm a Little Georgian"

Levan Adamia (Director)

"We wanted to make a film about short people. Society calls them "Lilliputs". We decided to make an informative film about these people and show how they are represented in literature, painting, cinema, etc. Then we remembered the "Lilliput Circus" and decided to find people who are members of the troupe. We found such interesting characters that we quickly changed the focus of the film and instead reflected the life stories of these people.

We found about eight of these people, but only five of them were included in the film.

Before we started to shoot, we heard that one of the "short people" who was from Racha had committed suicide. This became a strong impulse for making the film "I'm a Little Georgian" and show the personal, often asocial, lives of these people.

Manana Khidasheli, co-scriptwriter – This person lived in a village and found it difficult to adjust to the conditions in the village as he couldn't work. Eventually the lack of socialization became the reason for his suicide. Unfortunately, we couldn't tell this story in the film so we followed those who are alive and reproduced their stories on the screen.

Generally, we found it difficult to find such people and recruit them into the project. There were some who were very happy to cooperate. But others felt very uncomfortable about their condition and refused to join the project. Those who we recorded live in the regions. They have built their own micro-environment around them and have grown used to their lives. Unfortunately, there is no real data about these people. We found it difficult to find them. There are no unions or statistics. We were looking for them in the streets, door by door, village by village.

Levan Adamia

- When we finished working on the film, we heard many radical opinions and we had to defend our position. There was either very positive feedback, or else it was quite the opposite.

Photo: Khatuna Khutsishvili

Photo: Khatuna Khutsishvili

Documentary Film Studio – The Beginning of the Studio

Shalva Shengeli (Director in chief of the Documentary Film Studio)

Before the Documentary Film Studio was established, the Public Broadcaster had a documentary film department and a studio "Continuing the History of Georgia" was operating separately. In the studio, documentary and historical films would be made through artistic scenes. Last year a decision was taken to unify these two studios. This formed the Documentary Film Studio and Kote Jandieri was appointed head of the studio. Gocha Zhorzholiani is the producer-in-chief, and I am a director-in-chief. This is not an independent studio. We produce what the Public Broadcaster orders. However, we maintain our autonomy as much as possible. We also have our own logo and as soon as the logo appears on the screen, we want the audience to expect that they are going to be seeing a good film.

I don't think people would find us arrogant if we say that the Documentary Film Studio is the only studio in Georgia producing more than 30 films a year. This year we have made 33 documentaries in nine months. Of course not all of them are high-class products, but some of them have attracted international festivals. "I'm a Little Georgian" is one of these. Before its success, it went to the Promete Festival together with another film "The Ruler" (a film about Stalin). This was the first time a film produced by the First Channel got to the festival.

Directions

We have four directions: the first is when a film is based on archive materials, the second is live documentary, and the third is when we observe some events and make a film based on the observations. An example of this is a very interesting film by Ketevan Sadghobelashvili about a vineyard where the whole wine-making process is described, starting with the care of the vine going right until the wine is made. The forth direction is a historical feature-documentary called: "Continuing the History of Georgia"

The Bank of Ideas

Together with Mr. Kote, we have introduced and launched a very good initiative – the Bank of Ideas. Authors come with very good ideas, which we regularly look through.

The writer takes a certain idea and prepares a draft. The material is then elaborated and if it is interesting it gets launched for production. Normally, if the film is designed and thought through in an interesting way, we are open to any topic.

Working on a Film

The process of production is dependent on the above-mentioned four directions. If it is a live documentary, you don't write a script but keep an eye on events and make a film based on the observations. You can simply design a draft and then construct the film. There is a saying: "in cinema the director is God and in documentaries God is the director."

When making a film from the archive materials, we can write a script in advance. Then you find the materials in the archive and put the film together. In such cases we buy materials from the State Archive. The Public Broadcaster also has a very rich archive, which needs proper care and preservation, which, unfortunately, is not being provided.

Backward Technologies and Budgets

This is the most painful issue. We are far behind in terms of technologies and techniques. We use the machines of the First Channel and since they are not of a high standard, the films cannot be high quality either. Therefore, when we see that a topic is interesting and has a big potential, we allow ourselves to hire good technologies.

As for the film budgets, we spend about 19,000 GEL for each film and it covers all the expenses including salaries. However, there are films which might cost only 200 GEL when, for example, a film is based only on archive materials. This is very little money by international standards. For example, last year, a visiting expert from the BBC gave a masterclass and told us – if a film doesn't have a budget of 200,000 euros, it will never be a subject of discussion and nobody will take it seriously. Unfortunately, we live in a different reality.

Future Plans

From the September of the next season, we will be on air for ten months instead of nine months. Thus, the number of films will increase and we will have 36 films. We have already been working on 10 films and two of them are in the process of editing. One of the very interesting films concerns the 26th of May and is based on archives and telegrams, showing the correspondence between Stalin and Orjonikidze, Lenin and the Georgian government, and through this correspondence we can see how the annexation of Georgia happened. We are also working on a film "Continuing the History of Georgia", the fall of Constantinople and the following period, relating how Georgia became isolated from Europe. The series is called: "Time and its Favourites".

We aim to make popular and high quality films that will bring success to our studio. We made our first step with Levan's film "I'm a Little Georgian." This was a real breakthrough into a closed-off area.

›› Nino Kevlishvili
Nato Sakuashvili

Ancient Literature and Cinema, a Newborn Baby

Conversation with Levan Berdzenishvili

In the beginning was the Word… not the Image… When the conversation starts like this, you know that you have submissively to follow Levan Berdzenishvili's 'Mythology', the story of five myths about cinema and literature: birth, puberty, growth, baptism and returning...

Birth

It is obvious that there would be no cinema without literature, because cinema developed from theatre, which itself grew out of literature. Theatre was born from poetry. Poetry is branch of literature. Literature is an old art in contrast to cinema. If we look at history we see that literature is an old man and cinema is a newborn baby. If we look into the origins of theatre and lyricism we see that both come from the same place. It is said that both are born from music. Musical recitative is part of the art of poetry.

The Ancient Greeks created theatre and theatre gave birth to the cinema. However cinema is not just the child of theatre; it is a child of its era which includes technical development, chemistry, and physics, and that is why there is no direct continuity. We cannot say that cinema was born from poetry alone; rather that poetry was simply one of its ancestors.

Puberty

To repeat Tolstoy's words: 'Every good piece of literature looks the same, good films differ from each other.' Film does not ask questions, film answers them. In this respect film is overtaken by literature in real life too. I cannot imagine a film made today which will not lose its relevance in 30 years time. In literature the contrary is an ordinary phenomenon. Bulgakov's Master and Margarita was published 30 years after it was written and became a masterpiece. I don't mean that a film made 30 years ago cannot good; on the contrary, I prefer films made 30 and 40 years ago, but if we judge them from the perspectives of commerce this is definitely the case.

Growth

Films in the first place are a commercial product. The biggest difference between film and other artistic domains is commerce. Literature needs a writer and paper. Films needs production, money, management, and sociopolitical conditions. That is why Georgian cinema is impossible because the Georgian audience is too small for there to be any possibility of making a multi-million dollar film. This does not refer to low-budget one-man productions, but in general cinema is a mass phenomenon. I remember Sokurov's film Faust and I think that only Sokurov and I actually saw the film. It is practically impossible to show this film in big theatres. I have no idea what might happen if it were to be shown on a big screen. I have seen a man standing outside the booking office shouting that he would kill anybody who said that they liked Once Upon a Time There was a Singing Blackbird… Do you know why? The

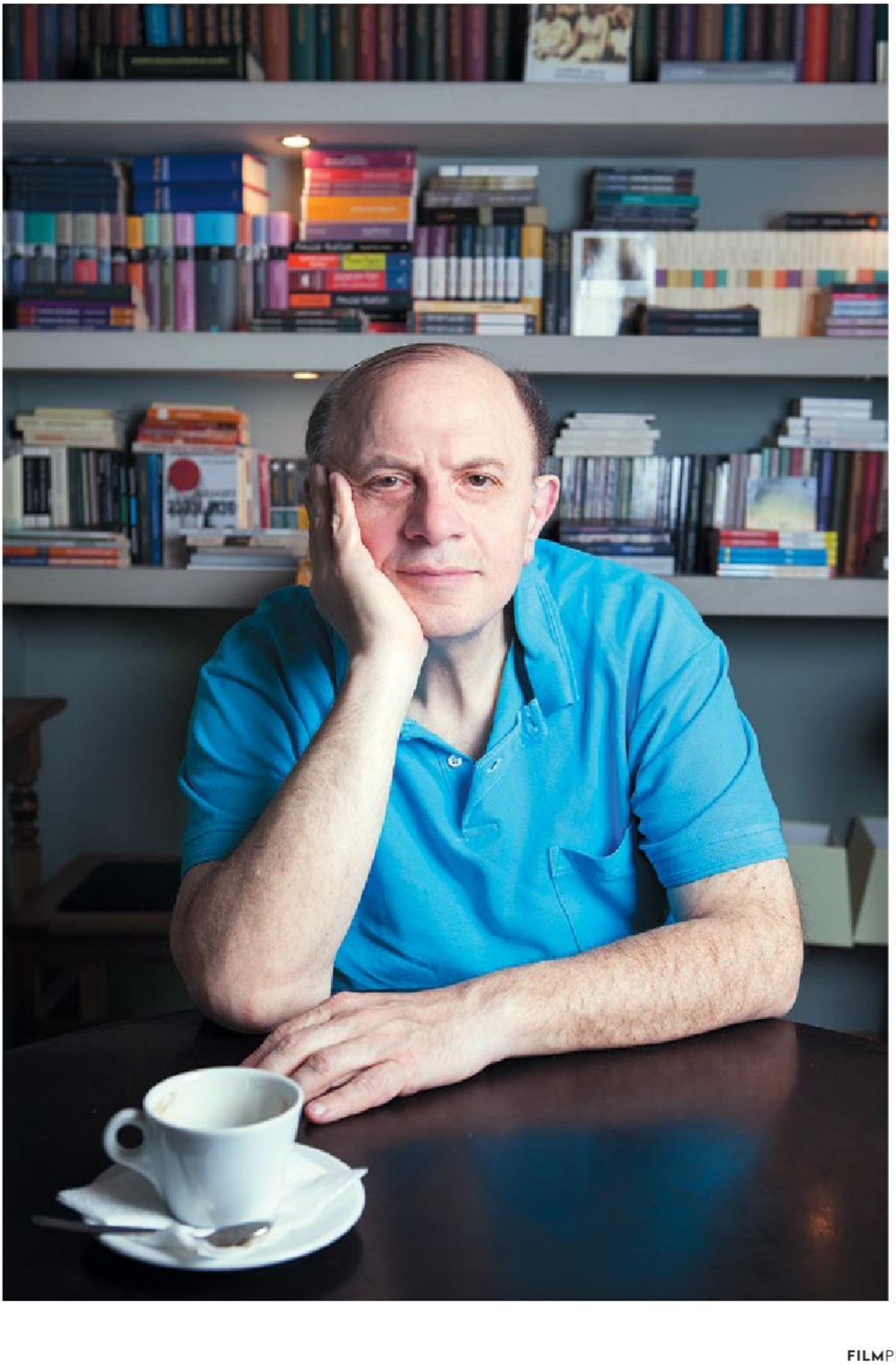


Photo: Khatuna Khutsishvili

film is for the elite, as well as having an elitist director. This is a one-man film which will never make Otar Iosseliani a millionaire. We know that Faust is a brilliant work of art: can an elite film be brilliant? If Leva Berdzenishvili is to decide then yes, it can be. But according to the rules of cinema if it is decided by the audience than it transpires that none of the elite films are great, but there are exceptions…

Baptism (Homo Unius Film)

Coppola is a man of one film like a 'Homo Unius Libri', the author of a single book. The Godfather is brilliant in every way. The film meets the most substantial criteria. It has a mass audience and can evoke kindness in people. It must be said that a film should not have a director like a God who knows everything, but rather it needs a good team. In such grand films, dialogues are written by the dialogue specialists, psychologists work on the psychological part and the world's biggest film stars do the acting. It is a known fact that the most popular actor at that time Laurence Olivier refused to play the main part, but when he saw Marlon Brando's portrayal of Corleone he regretted his decision. Actors and actresses, film language, camera technique, humanism, moderate cruelty, pursuit, tension, and rhythm all create an ideal combination in this film, a Homo Unius Film.

However, this film is also an adaptation of a book…

Returning

You cannot name a film adaptation of a book which was better than the original, if the original is a masterpiece. But if the original is an average book for example A Clockwork Orange than it is possible. Here Kubrick was actually better than Burgess. I am a film enthusiast but not one of those who try to compete with books. This happened with such a great and acknowledged work as Death in Venice. You will sense the failure of the film as soon as you see Tadzio on the screen. You can find only two or three people on earth with this kind of stunning beauty, not more… This is already a mistake. Meanwhile we do not understand the main thing: what is happening to Achenbach? It is not surprising that we like children as does Tadzio. This is a fiasco despite the fact that Luchino Visconti is a great director and the writer of my favorite film Rocco and His Brothers. We know that this film is also an 'adaptation' of the book The Brothers Karamazov, but the director does not say that. If the film is analogous to the book it will be a failure, but if the script gives you freedom as it does in Death in Venice then the film cannot even come close to the level of the original. If this is attained it means that the original was not so great. The best case is when both the original literature and the film are great, which means that both are different compositions. For example take films by Milos Forman, which in spite of being adaptations have almost nothing in common with the books. This is the case when the film is altered and the author of the book cannot even recognize his own work. One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey is an anti-American work, but the film is anti-Soviet.

You are the readers and performers, I am a 'writer' and we both collaborate. Watching a film is like listening to music. You don't participate in its creation. You don't create the film and the director is alone… there is a question: which is 'greater', a great director or a great writer? ... In the beginning was the Word… not the Image… But both are parts of one myth, a myth about art, which creates a reality first and then returns to the source.

›› Maka Kevlishvili

Photo: Khatuna Khutsishvili

The Place of Production in Modern Georgian Cinema
Interview with Vladimer Katcharava

When we start to talk about Georgian cinema, there are a lot of problems that emerge. Production is one of the domains which is actually not well developed in Georgia. What is the situation today in this regard and are there any signs of progress?

There is obvious progress, at least due to the fact that Georgian films get to very good festivals and win prizes, which did not happen a couple of years ago when Georgian cinema was said to be dead. Many people believed that nothing could be done to revive it and to bring back even a shadow of the renown which Georgian cinema once had. Today it looks like our success is more obvious to foreigners abroad. Considering the small amount of money given to the cinema and the quality of the cinema industry in general, we can say that Georgian films have attained great success. In the past there were many problems with production and organizational issues, European standards, relationships with funds and foreign film, and many people did not know what to do. I think that today the major problem is lack of high quality screenwriters. Where can they come from if they cannot sustain themselves? They go to TV in the best case or just become distributors. Screenwriters cannot even earn a living through their work and of course this affects the quality. The film industry in Georgia is in the situation where a producer has to take huge financial risks. This makes you think that if you do not believe in what you are doing, you cannot achieve anything. You have to believe in a project and the director in order to start a business.

FP: We live in an era of technological progress (when anyone can make films and distribute them on Facebook and YouTube), how can this affect film production in your opinion?

I think it can be positive…

FP: And aren't there any problems connected with this?

I don't think so. Well, there are some indicators of quality which should meet certain standards. There are an increasing number of devices that can do this and which cost very little, so that almost everyone can afford them and buy them to make films. However, one thing is very important, I often hear things like "I want to make a film about "Aleksa"… a film is basically a way of telling a story and often people are overly focused on the technical means and they forget that what you film with or how you light it is not the most important thing. Technical details can very important but they are not always a solution. The solution is on the artistic side. We have just made a film in Svaneti and used a camera which cost only 5000 euros. But when people watch the film they will just think "it's about Aleksa". Therefore, it depends on how you do it. In a film, it's important to make a viewer interested in the story. When the audience watches a story they never think about where the post-production was done – in Munich or in Sachkhere.

FP: What solution do you see and what can be done to develop production in Georgia?

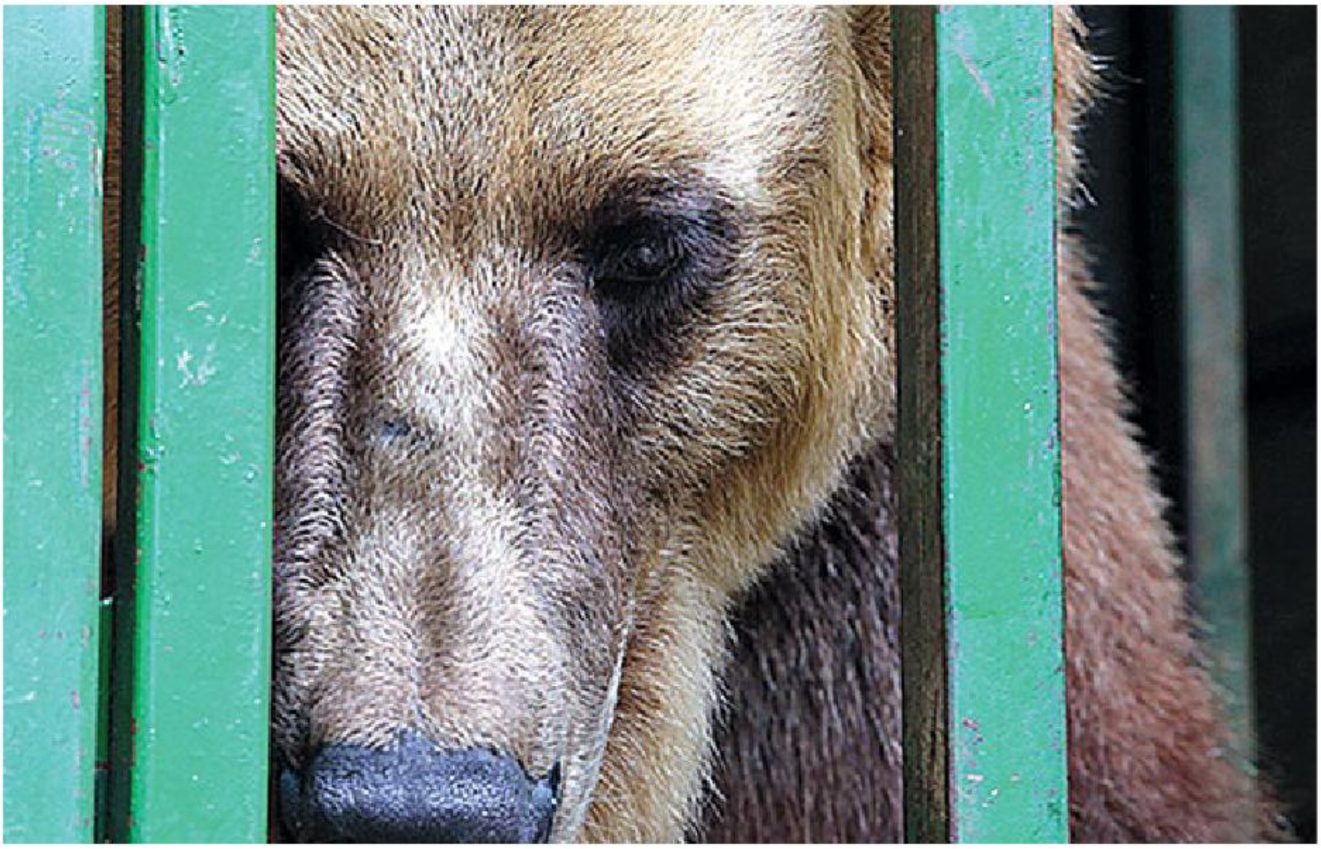
First of all, as much seminars as possible should be organized not only in producing but also in other cinema domains. At the University of Theatre and Cinema many things need to be changed. Often I meet directors who have no idea about their own profession. On the other hand, in a country where the film industry is still in the stage of development, there can't be as many as 7000 directors.

FP: I think there was an attempt to introduce a Master's degree in Film Production as a specialism.

I won't say anything. I graduated from the Film Management Department – nobody knew the subject and so nobody could teach it. However, on paper it says that I'm a film manager. I want to draw attention to one thing – there are two sources where films can get funding: the National Film Center and the Ministry of Culture, which themselves lack the money to invest in everything. And the competition is very high. There is very little money and a lot of projects don't get realized due to lack of money. For example, in Europe the public TV channels are actively involved in the market for investing in the cinema industry. And if there are not many places where a producer can attract money from, nothing will change. Another problem is the small size of the cinema network. We only have a few cinemas. If this is not sorted out, it will be very difficult to develop production because what's happening in reality is that there are several kinds of success. One thing is financial success and the other thing is the festival image. In reality we make a film without talking about financial profit. In Europe there is a different system but the actual size of the Georgian market is 300-400,000 GEL which isn't enough to even go to a businessman and talk about investments. Because few people speak Georgian and we don't have the internal market, you should make a film in either Russian or in English if it requires resources. But Georgia can develop in this way as it has regained its reputation. Everyone in Europe is talking about the new Georgian wave, the eastern wave in general. Georgian film is so significant that despite the fact that very little money is allocated to cinema, we can still make progress. However, if this issue isn't addressed shortly, it will be very difficult to maintain even the present level, not to mention any further development. Taxation is another issue, when it comes to co-production not everything is planned through and so it becomes a complex issue. We have to pay some taxes in addition to the costs, which surprises our partners as it weakens our position with respect to our competitor countries. First of all they have to equalize the legislation for cinema business in Georgia with other domains and businesses. Many people don't understand this and often when they talk to you, they say – how can we equate a film producer and a man selling apples and not take care of the latter? You want us to sort out your problems? But they forget that Georgia has the only chance of becoming a famous country through its culture and that cinema is a field of culture which is very complex and at the same time in demand. If we don't take care of this issue, Georgia will not be culturally developed. Eventually our cultural achievements will just remain in history, but if we develop in this direction and express ourselves, we will become competitive in reality.

Thank you for finding time to talk to us. Good luck.

›› Kote Abdushelishvili



Ursus

Otar Shamatava's new full-length film Ursus is a four-nation film production: Georgia, Ukraine, Germany and Bulgaria. In addition to private production companies, the film was funded by the Georgian National Film Center, the State Agency of Ukraine and the Bulgarian National Film Center. The project was financially supported during its post-production by MDM Film Commission (Germany). Film Print interviewed Otar Shamatava, who is the film's director and producer and the co-writer of the script.

Ursus

Ursus Arctos Syriacus – the Caucasian Brown Bear.

The idea...

The idea was born in 2005 in an absolutely paradoxical situation when director Zaza Buadze was working with me on TV Imedi. I told him a story which happened to me, Dato Janelidze, Dito Tsintsadze and a couple more filmmakers, in the 1990s. In the film studio building in Dighomi we kept a bear named Chola, who had been found by the filmmakers in the forest and who we had raised together. In 1991-92 there started up the civil war and the conflict. We all brought food from home for the bear. During these "dark" times (there was no electricity), Dato Janelidze told us that according to Pieter Jan, husband of our friend Nino Purtsvanidze, there was a Dutch Royal Society who might invite our bear Chola to Holland. I told him that it would be better if it was me they invited and took care of instead of the bear. Zaza Buadze said: that's a fantastic story for a film.

Logline

We thought about the logline a lot and understood one thing: this is a story about a director who had to turn into a bear himself in order to gain his freedom. He departed from himself, his wife, family, country… got through everything and left for somewhere far away…

Script

It's a long story – I wrote the script together with Zaza Buadze. In the process of developing the script we involved a so-called "script doctor", the German Dirk Dotzert. Zaza Buadze contributed most to the script. I am a co-author although I cannot write – I get short of breath and run ahead of events of the story. Nine languages (Georgian, Ukrainian, English, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and German) are spoken in the film and for obvious reasons, I don't want the script to get lost.

Production...

Eight years passed until the idea got realized. On 11th September we shouted the first "Action"(or rather "Motor" in Ukraine). The Ukrainian side contributed a lot to the filming, in particular Fresh Production alongside the producers Oleg Shcherbina and Yuliya Chernyavskaya. To the very end, they believed that everything would work out.

We have received not so much financial but rather moral and human support from our National Film Center. I am grateful to Nana Janelidze. The Ministry of Culture gave us money after one of the Georgian companies decided that it couldn't invest in it. I have a Studio O where all this was born. I personally negotiated with foreign producers. The proportion of the money for the co-production in percentages is as follows: Ukraine 45%, Georgia 25%, Bulgaria 10%, Germany 20%. We can say that the film is guaranteed a so-called "world sale".

Cast...

The "trio" is the key in this classic road movie, which means that the story of the characters started in Georgia. In fact they travel throughout the whole Europe together with Chola the bear, who is actually unsuccessful director Nika Korinteli hidden in a bear's skin. He's played by Nika Tavadze. His friend, a former stunt double and "Sancho Panza" type, is played by Ukrainian Bogdan Benyuk, who is an actor of unique depth. The third character is an animal trainer and after a long search to fill this role we discovered the French actress Josephine de la Baume. Apart from these three actors, the whole cast are very interesting and impressive, including German Christian Ulmen, French Georges Carafes, and Bulgarian LCA Safarova who plays the role of Vanga the prophet.

On set...

The shooting process was very complex as some scenes had to be done in a day. We couldn't return but just moved from one place to another. Due to the specifics of the road movie, locations would get often changed. We also filmed mostly at night as the daylight wasn't long enough. It was already dark at 5 p.m.

Cameraman/artist

The Ukrainian Sergey Bordenyuk is a very interesting cameraman. The scene artist for the film is also Ukrainian.

Music...

We haven't selected a composer for the film yet although the music will be original. We have several themes we are going to use in Ursus. The actress Josephine de la Baume, who makes electronic music together with her brother, offered us an interesting leitmotif for the film.

» Nino Kavtaradze

Photo: Khatuna Khutsishvili

Half a Century has Elapsed

The film Alaverdoba was released in 1963. It was made by Guram Rcheulishvili after the story of the same name. The writer was the uncrowned king for the artistic youth of that time. His words easily reached the novice film director Giorgi Shengelaia, who was just taking his first steps in cinematography.

When watching the film, it is not so noticeable that it is a screen adaptation. The film is accompanied by the author's text. We should look for the reason for this in the synthesis of feature and documentary styles of working. It becomes clear that the writer's writing style matches the frankness of the direction.

The writer was busy with portraying the image of an ordinary man during his short creative and physical life. Shengelaia put people and their problems first.

In the exposition of the film, the audience finds out the reason for his visit to Alaverdi is to do with a folk festival which the young journalist is assigned to cover by his editor. Such a beginning is exclusively Shengelaia's style. It is raining in both the streets of Tbilisi and in Alaverdi. The images and sound especially attract the audience's attention. The intrigue increases and the director uses a method of contrast and sharp conflict. Bad weather is followed by the sun and at first sight the frozen stillness is followed by a rapid purposeful motion. Such a development of the story is very effective and increases the emotional feeling.

Since old times alaverdoba has always been a festival for the harvest and crops. Apart from this secular meaning, for it used previously to be done in a church, it has some hint of the sacred. Thus, it is natural that it had a binary meaning. Prayers, animals to be sacrificed, donations, feasting, and joy would all be a part of the celebration, but everything has its limits. The reason for the licentiousness is the subject of investigation for both the writer and the director.

Unlimited carousing and boundless passion is followed by fights, drunken rivalry, endless drunkenness and terrible acts. The Alaverdi church is a witness to all of these disgraces. The main character confronts this godlessness. Rcheulishvili portrays the transformation of the psychological mood of the main character very precisely. The latter's action is understood to be a response with passion against passion.

Unlike the writer, Shengelaia does not give freedom to his characters, whose nature, therefore, might be restricted, but in turn, every thread of the drama obeys the alaverdoba and the main idea of the film. The stories given in the original source deepen the ideological message and its purposefulness. The boundless passion at the festival and his confrontation with it makes the main character grasp the passion and complexity of life as he stands on top of the church,.

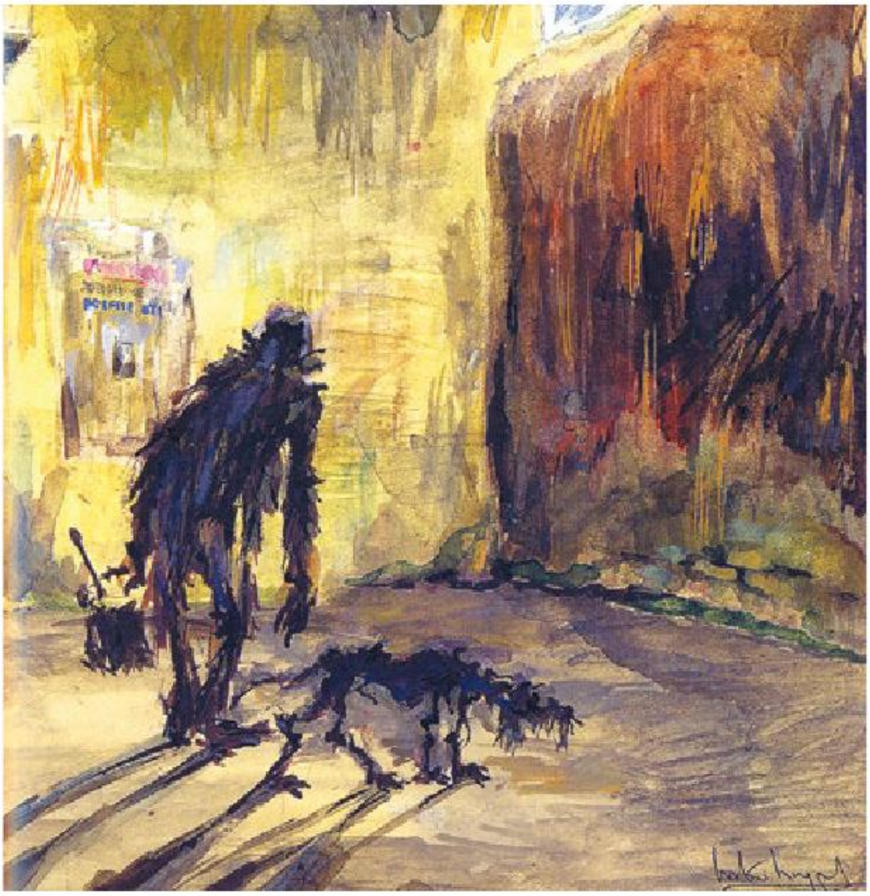
Compared to the original story, Shengelaia's film is sharply tendentious. This position does not lead to exclusion and neglect. The primary merit of the director is that he does not follow the author's text word for word, which allowed him to fully understand the pathos of the original story and thus get the protest across to the audience. It is as though Shengelaia shapes the peculiarities of feelings that the characters have. The passion of the character and all the related actions were replaced by the conscious protest in the film.

The film prologue justifies the presentation of different characters in the film. Unlike in the original story, here the personality of the hero is specified. Shengelaia's character is specified, but solid and well thought-through. He knows what he wants and what he is fighting against. This is probably why the camera does not make a close-up shot of the main character as he is standing on the roof of the Alaverdi Church. It merges with the space around and remains an indivisible part of it. This is probably one of the most significant findings. The director and his hero put a full-stop here and, unlike the literary source, they never show us the face of the hero in order to have us hear his last words: "Intensity of passion is in the process of building and not in the joy of building the construction," declaimed in a sublime tone.

The film Alaverdoba is a problem and a subject of research in both the story and the film. The only difference is that if for the former it is a way of bringing the problem out, for the latter it is a point from where we look down into the complex gamut of the whirlpool of feelings. Both works are supported by the civil position of the authors. The story challenged its readers to think and so did the film challenge its audience. This is how the independence, subjectivity and impartial image of the film can be explained.

The film took on a mission to pioneer a new aesthetics. It was the bearer of a genetic code which led to a fundamental and comprehensive idea which the contemporary generation wanted to understand. On the other hand, former generations had to comprehend and justify their routine existence while expecting the transformations. Shengelaia's Alaverdoba portrayed the pain which the generation of cinematographers of 1960s brought to Georgian cinema. This is why this film remains a remarkable work right until today, as it opened the door to a new style of artistic thinking in the history of Georgian cinematic art.

›› Girgi Ghvaladze



Dato Takaishvili's "Plague"

Dato Takaishvili's animation "Plague" was a prize winner at the Cannes Film Festival in 1984, where it was awarded the Golden Palm (there is no animation film contest at the Cannes festival). Somebody in Moscow called the film studio in Tbilisi to share the news. It was evening and an unknown man picked up the receiver. The guy from Moscow was expecting a very "Caucasian" emotional reaction, but was astonished when the Georgian quietly thanked him. The man from Moscow asked who he was speaking to - who is this? –he asked. This is Dato Takaishvili, came the answer. But aren't you happy to hear that you've won the prize? Sure, I am very happy, thank you. Then he said goodbye and hung up the receiver.

According to Dato's friends and relatives, this episode mirrored his personality: he was humble, discreet, and modest. This year there are two anniversaries connected with this talented artist who died so young – Dato Takaishvili would have celebrated his 55th birthday and it is 30 years since his film won in Cannes.

In his last interview (Cinema, 1989, No. 4), Dato Takaishvili said that it was by accident that he got into the film faculty at the university. He was planning to study architecture in either the Academy of Arts or the Polytechnic Institute. By chance he saw an announcement in a newspaper that for the first time ever the Theatrical Institute was inviting applications for a course in the direction of animated films. He submitted his application, won through the competition and got the place. "Animated films have unlimited potential. They cover feature movies, graphics, painting, sculpture, documentary materials and so on. This is a synthesis of many different genres. Animated film is the most realistic way to realize my ideas," said Takaishvili.

"Plague" was his first independent work after he graduated from the institute. It all started as follows – his course mate and friend Dato Sikharulidze, an artist and film director, read him a script which was about a white creature painting the world around it in only one colour - white. Dato Takaishvili was attracted to the clearly outlined idea of the script: the world is various and multicoloured and it cannot be dominated by only one colour.

When Gela Kandelaki, the head of their group at the institute, heard about this, he insisted that the friends should work together on the project, with Takaishvili as director, and Sikharulidze as screenwriter and painter. The young men began working on the project, although with no enthusiasm because they both wanted to work independently, but Kandelaki had his way.

When a chief editor read the script he got angry (for some reason he could not near the white colour): how dare you make an anti-Soviet film? And he threatened the young men.

As often happened, the script went to Moscow for approval and a warning letter from the chief editor with it too saying that the script should not have been approved because of its anti-Soviet content. An editor in Moscow, Armenian by nationality, who was in charge of animated films from the Caucasus liked the young men and told them: they will censor the script and so I would advise you to change the white to brown. Then it will be a clear symbol of fascism. The authors agreed but they had to change the background too because the city looked like Moscow and they made everything in the gothic style.

It worked. Later, by chance, with the help of Russian colleagues the film got to the festival, though the creators had no idea about this. In the contest program it was titled in Russian as "Chuma" (Plague). It won the prize and shared the Golden Palm with the French colleague Jerald Freedman.

As Dato Sikharulidze told me, instead of being excited and overjoyed by the victory, for some reason Georgian society was actually very annoyed and angry: who do these greenhorns think they are, winning a prize? and so on… Especially active was one well-known "national" cinematographer. At one of the meetings of the cinema society he abused the authors of the film – "Dato got so furious that I hardly managed to stop him from hitting the guy," Sikharulidze remembers. After the meeting this "national" artist came up to Dato and said: "that's just me and my nasty temper, I couldn't help swearing at you."

It is interesting that after winning the Cannes festival, both Takaishvili and Sikharulidze were accepted in the Union of Soviet Cinematographers. They were only accepted to the same union in Georgia two years later. However, the young people were not totally ignored - by order of Rezo Chkheidze they were given Zhiguli cars.

The famous cameraman Vadi Yusov brought the prize from Cannes, but could not get it to the addressee. It is still kept in Moscow. It is strange that nobody has ever tried to bring the material evidence of one of the biggest victories of Georgian cinema back to Georgia.

As they say, this huge success made no difference to Dato Takaishvili's personality. He kept leading his routine working life and making films. Before he died, he managed to make several more movies: "Babilina", "The Puppy", "Expectation". In 1989 he went to Moscow to submit his last film. Before departing, he said in an interview: "I have big plans… at the moment the most important thing for all of us is to work, work and work…" Very soon after this the shocking news of his death came from Moscow…

P.S. The idea to write about Dato Takaishvili, as well as the materials, was provided by Lali Gorgaslidze, for which I would like to thank her.

>> Irakli Makharadze

Arkadi Khintibidze

There are people who have contributed hugely to the foundation and development of Georgian cinema and without whom Georgian film would not be as it is today. It is sad that these people and their deeds remain unknown to a wider audience but how are they to know about them if even some of our film critics are interested only in a few foreign and Georgian film people and play with their names like street-organs. Books are written, documentaries are made, and monuments are even constructed in the most fashionable places in honour of this handful of people. But film critics do not want to hear about less known or unknown names and writing about them is thought to be a waste of time. Of course, nobody can have any objections about famous film personages, but the names and deeds of those who laid the foundations of Georgian cinema should not be forgotten and put in the shade.

Arkadi (Kako) Khintibidze is one of the people whose name and contribution has been forgotten. Even the older generation do not know his name, but his animated films such as: "Tsuna and Tsrutsuna", "The Jays' Wedding", and "The Quarrel" are audience favourites. He was one of the most distinguished actors of the Georgian silent and sound cinema. His roles, such as Karamani ("Who is to Blame?"), Ivane Aznauri ("The Revolt in Guria"), "Titiko" ("Dariko"), a dumb prisoner ("The Last Mass Masquerade"), Mikela ("The Lost Heaven") and many more, are a real treasure of the actor's art.

Arkadi Khintibidze started his acting career on a village stage in Guria. He had previously graduated from Kutaisi Teachers' College and in 1918 he went to war. He would recall this moment with humour: "Kutaisi… at that time students would be called up for military service by sweet, endearing words. Once I went to such a meeting and the next day together with about 10 other of my naïve companions I went to the railway station… they counted us as volunteers and sent us to Batumi. Then I became part of a machine-gunners' group. After one month of training they took us to the war and after 15 days of battles we lost Batumi. I got away on the last train. I had not fought many battles but had experienced so much that I left active service and joined the other military staff of a frontier battalion where I found a post of writer."

After military service, he was appointed as a school teacher in the village of Nagomari, where he worked for two years but, as he admitted, he did not make a good teacher and went back to

the theatre. In 1923 he was taken on by the theatre company "Red Theatre", which was then operating in the building of the current Marjanishvili Theatre.

The young actor was noticed by Aleksandre Tsutsunava, the stage director who had recently moved to Georgia from Moscow and who was a follower of the Stanislavsky system. The actor played in Tsutsunava's plays, such as: "Who is to Blame?" and "The Revolt in Guria". As a result, Arkadi Khintibidze earned the name of "the most talented actor of the Gurian nobility" and the stage plays were so successful that the stage director decided to make them into films.

In the film "Who is to Blame?" (its other title being "The Wild West Rider" sharing the adventures of Gurian riders in America), Tsutsunava gave Khintibidze the part of Karaman, one of the most important characters. In the actor's words, this "caused a lot of murmuring for on the stage this role was successfully played by Sandro Zhorzholiani, who was believed to be one of his favourites, but the director preferred the young actor and he was a great success.

"I was so excited and happy that I couldn't sleep for fifteen days," the actor recalled. In this film, as in every other film, he is very natural as if he is not acting at all but just living the role, and as they say, the camera loved him.

He had a born talent which is impossible to buy. Working with Tsutsunava gave Khintibidze a great deal of experience and skills and opened the door to the big world of cinema (he never returned to the theatre again). The actor remembered his teacher with great respect: "I've worked with many directors but I've never experienced as much satisfaction in the cinema as I did with Tsutsunava. I have to say that his removal from cinema was a big mistake. He was a real Georgian film maker and he could have grown into a much better master of cinematography if he had been given the opportunity". While still working for the film studio, in 1928 he graduated from the Faculty of Law at Tbilisi State University.

Arkadi Khintibidze became a famous and popular actor, but as it turned out not with everybody. In 1934 during the shooting of the film "Zhuzhuna's Dowry" by the actor's friend Siko Palavandishvili, Sergei Eisenstein arrived in Tbilisi as a consultant to the film director. "Eisenstein disapproved of me," recalls Khintibidze "and advised them to employ another type of actor", but the film director got his own way and as a result, Khintibidze's dumb collective farmer is one of the most significant characters in his artistic career. However his best character was still to come. This is was the nobleman Mikela Kalmakhidze in the film "The Lost Heaven" by David Rondeli. For everyone who saw this film, it is impossible to forget the moment when after the party, as the noblemen are singing the song "Zestapono, I'm Leaving You", Khintibidze is giving back the clothes he had borrowed to the owners on his way back home and when he finishes, he enters his own yard with a proud and noble bearing.

In 1941, the actor played his last role in Siko Dolidze's film "The Friendship". Afterwards he moved into film direction and worked in both fiction and documentaries. He started to work in animation when he was over 50. He had never received any special education neither in drawing or in animation, but this did not stop him from creating world-class masterworks based on national roots and traditions. He enriched Georgian animating with new characters, expressive tools, plasticity, and unique charm, so that his films are very easily recognizable and most importantly, the director made animated cartoons into an interesting show for audiences of all ages.

In the film studio Khintibidze was highly popular and greatly loved (especially among the ladies, who would all fall for him). Tastefully dressed and with an aristocrat bearing, although actually from a poor peasant family, he always looked distinguished. For this reason he was given the nickname "Hertsogi" (Duke). He used to celebrate his birthdays in the film studio, when almost the whole staff gathered together. He always tried to help everybody, especially new people in animated cartoons. Bondo Shoshitaishvili, the famous animator, remembered that when he arrived in Georgia together with his other colleagues, directors did not give them any work as they were afraid that unexperienced young professionals would be a detriment to the upcoming film. Arkadi Khintibidze was the first man to offer his help and invite the young people to work.

The news of his suicide in August 1963 was a great shock to everyone. Why this talented artist, who could still have created more masterpieces, ended his own life has always been a mystery. At an event in the Film Union dedicated to his memory in 1973, his friend Kote Mikaberidze noted: "We should take care of each other, and we shouldn't wait! We could have saved Khintibidze's life if we had been more considerate to him. Let's make no more mistakes!" Mikaberidze died in the same hall immediately following the event.

I have often heard from the media that society has not made an order this or that topic is discussed. How could society make any order if it is not provided with any information about these topics? In such cases the problem seems to stem from the lack of information and education, and thus the lack of interest.

» Irakli Makharadze

SPECIAL FOCUS

"Give me the Smile of Cabiria in the Finale"

Interview with Roman Balaian

Roman Balaian, the Ukrainian screenwriter and director, cannot get used to the use of unprintable words and the showing of the swamp of life in the cinema. He believes that dissection of a patient is the prerogative of pathology anatomists and not film directors. Only the former know what disgusting things they will find there.

FP: They say that beauty will save the world.

No, Dostoevsky meant not a specific beauty, but the harmony of a human being, the human harmony of the world. Brodsky saw "the Color of Pomegranates" by Parajanov in New York. In the interview he said that Parajanov does not create a beauty, but he tries to preserve the beauty. What a brilliant insight. When I have time, I will read his poems. Parajanov used to refer to himself as a genius. He said that in a way that suited him. Many people didn't like his "The Legend of the Suram Fortress". I wasn't mad about it either. The translation was also bad and I couldn't understand much of it. But Tonino Guerra adored it. He went back to his house and as he was walking upstairs he shouted: "Sergio, geniale, geniale!" Parajanov looked at him and said quietly– are you saying this to me? Shout it loudly to make them all hear it. In Kiev I discovered one of his film scripts which he wasn't allowed to film. He had every single shot sketched out. I took it to him saying – look what I've found here, your film script. You should have it back. He turned to me - why are you giving it to me? Don't you want to put it in the Parajanov Museum one day? In the 1990s they opened a museum about him. How could he know this? He made beautiful films, but sadly many people don't like this kind of cinematography. Even some professionals don't understand him. The aura of a genius gets established in the world. I think I've got away from the question.

FP: In one of your interviews you say that you shouldn't make a film but live it.

Did I say something as clever as this?

FP: Yes. What do you think today, what percentage of film directors live their cinema films?

About 10%, I think. I don't mean myself, but the best film directors in the world. The number is very small. It's possible to count them on one hand. Once I was asked – what does it means to be a good film director? What a strange question. How can I answer that? I suddenly realized – a good film director is one who can see with his ears and hear with his eyes.

FP: These are your words again – "in Soviet times I was fed by a lack of freedom."

This is a paradox but it's true. All artists were fed by having no freedom. We would create things with our fists hidden in our pockets and the bosses didn't notice anything. It made the imagination work. I forced my brain to express what I wanted to say in a subtle way and packaged it well. When Gorbachov came, I didn't know what to make films about - love? People of my age got lost. They didn't know what to do anymore. They made films, but they were more boring than before.

FP: How well do you know the new Georgian cinema?

During the Soviet period the directors met each other often either in Tbilisi, or

Photo: Inna Margvelashvili

There was a Soviet cinema and there was a Georgian cinema, Georgians mostly referred to the classics

Moscow, or Kiev. There was a Soviet cinema and there was a Georgian cinema. Georgians mostly referred to the classics. Georgians are born directors and actors. This is the organic state for you. I suppose, you have a life like this. We represented different cultures and enriched each other. The links were wider. Today cultural relationships have been reduced or disappeared. Therefore, we don't know much about each other, which is sad.

FP: What is the main criterion you use to assess a film?

When the "what" and the "how" coincide in a film. I like that kind of film. If they don't coincide, I don't find the film interesting. After three minutes I can say whether I will like what I see on the screen or not. How a shot is constructed, how they talk – here and now, or if they follow a ready-made text. If I see that an actor is speaking in line with the script, because Shakespeare wrote such and such, and the words are not said from the heart, I have no interest in it. Art house is a different genre. Jarmusch's films are comprehensible and follow a story, you know what the film is about and you become a part of it. But there are films where you can never get involved neither in the beginning nor at the end. They are sluggish, the director knows nothing. You don't understand what he wants. This is like an author film. But how can you understand it? I'm more for Jarmusch's cinema.

FP: Which film made the strongest impression on you recently?

"Underground" by Emil Kusturica. I saw this film quite a long ago and am still under its powerful spell. I'm envious of it. What a freedom there is in this film. How the director works, what a camera! What discoveries! I like his other films less. "Underground" is a masterpiece, a peak, the Mont Blanc of cinema. There are films which caused a great scandal once, but today they don't have the same impact. For example, "Amarcord" or "And the Ship Sails On" by Fellini have a number of beautiful, touching episodes which one might die for: when the glasses make music on the ship. But still it's difficult to watch the film. Fellini is the only artist who thought of leaving hope to the main character despite a hard and tragic biography. For example, "The Nights of Cabiria" concerns the tragic life of a woman. The director thought of a finale which was missing in the script. Cabiria is following the road and cyclists catch up with her. They are asking her something and the woman is forced to smile. I say to young people – yes, you can make heavy, horror films but give me the smile of Cabiria in the finale. It's not difficult, is it?!

» Inga Khalvashi

Photo: Inna Margvelashvili

"Now it's the Time to Act"

The film "White Sun of the Desert" gained great popularity in the 1970s. As soon as it was shown on the big screen it became a cult film. Phrases from the film moved from the film into everyday life and became as popular among Soviet people as the slogan "Glory to the Party!"

It is difficult to believe that the co-author of the film script Rustam Ibragimbekov was a post-graduate in Cybernetics and was at the same time presenting academic papers at the conferences around the world. Eventually his love for cinema turned out to be stronger and gradually art conquered over the science in his life. "Burnt by the Sun", "East/West", "Urga", "Interrogation", "Filler"- this is a small list of the films he wrote the scripts for. I talked with the successful writer, playwright, film and stage director. I talked with him in Batumi after the master class he led in the framework of the Art-House Film Festival.

This is not my first time at the festival. I knew what to expect and what not to expect. I know Georgian cinema very well and have many friends here. I went to university together with Amiran Chichinadze and Erlom Akhvlediani. I am always happy to have any reason for coming to Georgia. It's connected with my love for Georgia and my great interest in Georgian cinema. I knew where I was coming and I was very happy to agree to lead this workshop.

FP: You write scripts, plays, make films, stage plays. You have so much to say that it seems that one genre of art can't cover everything.

This variety of angles is the result of a number of factors. Firstly, it is because of censorship. I have been writing stories up until today. I started to write plays when for years film studios refused to film my scripts. Georgy Tovstonogov read one of my stories and said: you should write a play for the theatre. At that time I was not attracted to theatre and didn't know how to write plays, but I learned. Today I stage plays. The second reason is deeper and more important. For example, I live in a particular environment. Suddenly I meet somebody or encounter a situation which corresponds to a problem I live in. This is called resonance. For example, every bridge has a resonant frequency. When soldiers walk across a bridge, the steps they take create an artificial frequency with internal resonance. If these frequencies coincide, the amplitude increases, the resonance increases, and the bridge can collapse. When the impressions from the environment coincide with what has been collected in my soul, I get the desire to write. If many actions, many characters, and flexible situations are necessary to spell out my thoughts and ideas, I write a film script. If there is a very condensed idea which can be enriched through the language of theatre

and symbols, I shape the story as a play. My first stage play was “A Woman behind the Green Door”. Behind the green door we hear the voice of a woman asking for help. Nobody pays attention to her. Everybody is used to somebody asking for help behind the door. Everyone has their own thoughts and impressions about it. Someone is blaming her husband, someone is blaming-the woman herself, and someone else is blaming themselves. At the end of the first act a character appears who had previously suffered for sympathizing with the woman. As soon as she hears the voice of the woman, she breaks the door down and gets in. Later they also made a film of it which was not bad. However, in the play this door had more theatrical sense as it was seen as a symbol of bad luck and it made it possible to create a stronger image. And so, such a diversity of forms for expressing an idea is on the one hand connected with combating censorship, and on the other hand, it is dependent on the nature of the material.

FP: When you see the films or stage plays made of your scripts or plays, do you have the feeling that you saw something completely different when you were writing them?

This happens frequently. Therefore, I search for a director with whom I have a soul connection, who shares my ideas, views and feelings. Rasim Ojagov was such a director. I have made eight films together with him. One of them was awarded a State Prize. Unfortunately, at that time domestic cinema couldn’t travel abroad. Now it’s possible to export films. When a retrospective is organized showing the films made from my scripts, I always think that Rasim Ojagov’s films had the greatest success. Nowadays, if I can’t find a director who can grasp my thoughts in a relevant way, then I start to make the film myself. However, I have to admit that the screenwriter Ibragimbekov isn’t always happy with the director Ibragimbekov.

FP: How would you evaluate the cinema today? It feels that the themes of violence, brutality, and evil, dominate in modern cinema and nobody is interested in the human soul.

You know, the world is very turbulent. The age of great cinema has passed. Through the light had of Spielberg, Lucas and later Tarantino, cinema became more mobile as an attraction and deep and serious themes were driven out. Mass culture always existed for the masses and high art for the intellectual audience. Nothing new is happening. But an increasing number of young people engage with American mass cinema, which plays with emotions, instincts, and effects. Today our lives are boring and lack deep impressions. Previously we earned bread and met through fighting, but it’s not like this anymore. Therefore, today Hollywood attempts to give people something which they lack. They become heroes, they fight and win. Cinema has become very aggressive. Today the mediators have won. A priest has taken the place between God and Man; a judge – between law and the citizen; a producer between an audience and a writer. Everyone is interested in money. Therefore, they are in a hurry to gain more economical benefit from what they do. The number of people in the world who love real cinema has decreased. The problem today is not good films but a good audience. The audience who goes to the cinema today wants the films which they are offered. If a film studio makes ten films, only one goes out for screening. A vast amount of money is invested in promotion. This is another industry. A serious work can only attract a small audience as young people are captivated by active, attention-seeking cinema – a fast sequence of shots obeys the laws of addition. However, everything in the universe comes around again. I believe that the interest in serious, deep cinema will return and the internet will support this. The internet has created a revolution. You can upload a product on a website and it can get an audience of millions. Thus the balance will gradually be restored. Hundreds of millions will watch commercial cinema, and millions will watch serious cinema. So we shouldn’t give up. Now it’s the time to act.

›› Inga Khalvashi

Notes from Lectures by Marina Razbezhkina

If you are going to work in documentary cinema you should listen to the documentary director Marina Razbezhkina. Upon the invitation of Georgian Documentary Film, Marina has been to Georgia three times to meet documentary representatives from the South Caucasus and help them develop their projects.

Marina Razbezhkina started working in documentary cinema quite late, in her 40s. Today she leads a Documentary Film and Theatre school. Its structure is different to others and very special students go there.

"Our school is seven years old. It is my private organization called the Marina Razbezhkina and Mikhail Igarov School of Documentary Film and Theatre. It is based on documented fact and real life," says Marina.

To enrol in the school, you have to send in your work, but the interview is the most important part. It is as different as the process of studying there. As Marina says, they only accept crazy students.

"We are not interested in the level of your literacy. It's good if a person reads, but for a director this is not the most essential thing. Three years ago we accepted a girl who had never read a book, but she got her nourishment from real life. This is the only food for her. She reacts to reality very keenly, she knows it well and mirrors it well.

The main test we offer in the exams is: has there been any drama in your life? We don't touch on childhood drama. We ask about what happened at the age of awareness. As the candidates are mostly young people, generally drama is about love. We tell them – remember the moment of parting and get rid of your feelings. Just tell us what was happening at the moment when they were leaving? Did they look into your eyes? What were they holding? Where were they standing? What were they wearing? Where were you standing? What did you start to do? Did you collapse on a sofa and start to cry? Anyone who says that they don't remember because they were devastated can't be a director, because a director is somebody who experiences drama and at the same time sees themselves through a camera: What am I feeling? What am I wearing? How did I touch the door with my foot? How the windows were broken and how beautiful everything was at that moment. To others, we might be seen as terrible people. Lev Tolstoy has a note about his dying child: I'm sitting by the bed of my dying child and suddenly catching myself in the state that I'm trying to remember every single second of his dying moment in order to pass this to one of my characters later. I feel like a terrible man because of this, but this is the only way I can be.

Directing a documentary is a very specific field of cinema: when we film other people we actually film ourselves and we cannot avoid talking about ourselves. If we genuinely wish to honestly talk about others, we must declare the truth which we wanted to hide.

The duration of the course is 4 years and 4 months. There are certain rules that we follow during the course – for example, a film is made by one person, he or she searches for the characters, writes the script, conducts all the research, finds a spot to film, films it him-

When we film other people we actually film ourselves and we cannot avoid talking about ourselves

self or herself, thinks about the lighting and sound, and then edits it. Only at the next stage of the production can they be joined by other professionals.

The method through which we can get closer to a main character is having another "person" on the set. On one hand, this is difficult, but although all the burden is on you, when you are alone you are invisible, which is very important.

In addition to these rules, there are some other prohibitions in the school.

Tripod

The most important thing is to make the camera become a continuation of the hand and strangely enough, the most restless students, who are never calm in lectures, can suddenly gain such steadiness that sometimes I suspect that they are using a tripod. After a year and a half the camera truly becomes a part of the students' anatomy and there is no longer any interfere and when you get to this stage, you get to understand the anatomy of your character too. It is as if you already know where they are going to move their head before they decide to move it. You become a part of their biological structure. I have seen this only with great cameramen - the real existence of a character in a camera.

Zoom

I never allow the use of zoom. Today all cameras have a zoom, and in order to film a close-up we don't run up closer to it to film but instead, we simply use the zoom. We also ban the use of hidden camera. We never allow students to film people who don't know they are being filmed. You have to have people accustomed to you but they have to know that you are filming them. This is simply respectful behavior towards them. So if you want to film a large view you have to get closer instead of using the zoom. Of course, an experienced professional can use the zoom as well as a tripod, but only after they have mastered shooting without them. Although you will soon understand that, you will rarely need it. I don't even remember a case when it's necessary to use the zoom. Zooming is used in television and some cinematographers have learned its use there.

Direct interview

We don't allow students to get information about a character through interviews. This is the most difficult prohibition. We combined theatre, documentary and our film school because they all use a method of collecting material – verbatim. This is a kind of an interview: you talk to characters, but you do it in a different way as you give importance not to the content of what you are documenting, but ideas which come through pauses, ellipsis, muffled words. In fact, this is the most important thing and not the content. Just these speech interruptions and pauses, as well as rhythm, tells more about a person than the content of the subject they are talking about. It is also forbidden to ask a direct question. You shouldn't meet the expectations of a person who has been waiting for

you in any case. Students attain this method very well and never ask criminal questions such as: please, tell us your biography.

Music

During the course we do not allow the use of a musical soundtrack, for this is like a walking stick. You use music only when you can't tell the story with visual images, when you haven't mastered the rhythm. You put the music on and forget the rhythm of the shot and the person you are filming, as well as your own rhythm. You kill this all through using music as a soundtrack. Also, if you are not able to evoke some feelings in the audience, music will do this because it triggers people's feelings. You will put on Mozart and relax, and thus lose everything. We only allow the use of music which is recorded together with the episode. Also we do not allow there to be only a text without a shot. This is very ideological and also is testament to a lack of ability to narrate through shots. There are directors who do this very well, although it shouldn't be done at the first stage.

Apart from our prohibitions, we teach subjects which are not taught in other schools.

We have one subject which we teach which isn't taught anywhere else. It's called the Construction of Reality. This is partly a theoretical subject and shows that every person constructs reality and there is no objectively reflected reality. Therefore, nobody conveys ultimate truth and in general, no truth exists with anybody. It helps us to learn why the reality has been constructed this way and not another way and by whom. What are the reasons for creating such a reality in a specific case? I think through introducing this subject we are scientifically studying humanity. This is the same as maths or physics; we are also studying human beings but with the help of the camera.

The next unique subject which we have is Rhythmic Form. Actually, we are all driven by rhythm, natural rhythm, musical rhythm, psychological rhythm, any rhythm. We exist in a rhythmic universe. Directing is also rhythm. If you find a brilliant story and a wonderful character, but can't find a rhythm, neither the character nor the story makes any sense. You have lost. The audience won't watch such a film. Rhythm creates form.

Among real life observations, Marina recalls film terms: snake zone, horizontal and vertical cinema. It's difficult to reflect all of these without losing Marina Razbezhkina's enthusiasm and passion for her work. Therefore, in order to hear the full interview with her, which we based this article on, you can go to the following link:

soundcloud.com/sakdoc-film/marina-razbejkina-lecture

You can find additional information on the Documentary and Theatre School here: www.razbeg.org

›› Anna Dziapshipa

Interview with Pavel Lozinski

Pavel Lozinski was born in Warsaw in 1965. He graduated from the Faculty of Direction at Lodz Film School. His father Marcel Lozinski is also a well-known Polish documentary director, with whom Pavel made a couple of films. Pavel's films travel the international festivals with great success. This year Pavel was one of the jury members of the documentary section at the 9th Batumi International Film Festival of Auteur Films.

FP: Polish feature cinema is very successful and we've heard a lot about it. How would you describe Polish documentaries?

Polish documentary cinema is really distinguished by its specific style of narrative. We use real stories, but we edit them like a feature film. When we did a workshop last year and showed Polish films to the students and professors, they were surprised with the peculiarity of the editing and asked whether they were feature or documentary films. In many countries, documentary cinema involves interviews, music, texts out of shot, and an accurate portrayal of the truth, and this is the same in Polish documentary art. Probably like in every author documentary, we show our world, our vision. Until the 1980s, documentaries in Poland would precede the main film. A news chronicle would be first, and a feature film would follow after. The idea remains in Poland from those years that a documentary should be very short with a very clever idea, a good protagonist or good location, and everything must be presented in 10 minutes. For me the personal view and standpoint is the major thing. From the selection at the Batumi International Film Festival I most liked the film about Nick Cave. 20,000 Days on Earth, which is made as a feature film. It is staged, he is constantly acting, he's an artist, a musician, and it's a very good script. The Romanian film Waiting for August was very interesting too, although there was too much repetition and the format is also very long for me.

FP: Your films also continue the traditions of Polish documentary cinema. What are you working on at the moment?

I'm trying to make a film about the mediators in divorces who work before a couple gets to a court to separate. They can use mediation, and I want to make a film about these mediators.

FP: Your previous films were based on your own personal experiences. Has this topic appeared in the same way?

I'm also divorced and yes, partly it's based on my own personal experience.

FP: Did you also use this service?

No, a friend of mine is experienced in this. He changed his profession. He was a businessman and then became a mediator. He came to me and said that maybe we can make a film about this

Photo: Inna Margvelashvili

process. I told him that the idea was great, but only if we could find a good couple who would agree to be filmed. This was two years ago. We then found a couple, but things changed and now I have to find another couple. It's a hard process to find a man who will agree and who I also find interesting. This is something very personal and intimate, and it's very hard to film the process and to participate in it. But at the same time, it's very interesting to see how people change during the process – there is a lot of aggression, anger, and strong feelings that come out at some point – but they can still shake hands at the end.

FP: Do you use new technologies when filming documentaries?

I prefer the technique of observation and use only this. I let people express themselves. You have to observe them for a long time. I believe that people talk about very interesting things.

FP: Your film Father and Son is a very personal story. You must be very brave to talk about this.

Or stupid…

FP: I don't think so. You worked on this film together with your father. How was it?

In 2009, I had the idea to make a film about my father, and I suggested it to him. At first he agreed, but then he changed his mind and told me that he would only do it if he also made the same film, in which both of us would be directors, operators and the protagonists.

We started filming in Warsaw; we were sitting on a bench in a park, and were talking and filming. Emotionally it was very interesting I received quite a lot of information, but from the cinematographic point of view, it was nothing. I had no material in the end. And we thought of the journey from Warsaw to Paris. After finishing the filming, it took me a year to start editing. I could hardly make my father start editing – he was very reluctant. Then we argued and eventually he made his own version.

FP: And you both got a prize for your films?

Yes, in Krakow, for both films; they showed both versions there. It was crazy to do it.

F/P Were you angry after seeing each other's versions?

Yes, I don't know why he didn't like my version which isn't bad. It's perhaps to do with the ego.

FP: I want to ask you about teaching documentary cinema – you've worked with Krzysztof Kieślowski, and also with your father, Marcel Lozinski. What has this experience given you? And what kind of a teacher are you? What are your teaching methods?

It's very difficult to teach documentary cinema. Reality is everywhere, if you have a camera, you just need to reflect on what interests you. Krzysztof Kieslowski was a very good person, I wanted to be his assistant, to learn how to shoot films and worked with him for 40 days shooting the film "White". But at the end of the filming, I realized that I knew exactly as much as I did before. It's impossible to learn it. You can learn only when you make your own film. He was very quiet, never shouted. Working with him as well as assisting my father has been a great experience for me. I made five films with him. It was a good school. I graduated from the Lodz Film School.

As for my teaching experience, I do not have such a lot of practice. I'm tutoring at Gdynia Film School. In Poland documentary film isn't a top priority. Everybody wants to make feature films and go to Cannes. Documentaries are thought to be boring. They want to invent everything – the reality, and the characters. I want to teach that everything is already there, that the universe is already invented, you just have to observe it and see it. Everything is ready, and there is no need to recreate it and make up new dialogues. Today everybody is a director and everybody thinks that documentaries are simple and feature films are difficult.

FP: This reminds me very much of Georgia; we have the same attitude here.

Yes, today everyone everywhere is a documentary filmmaker.

FP: You mentioned a project Tbilisi from Dawn till Dusk held in Tbilisi. Did you participate in it as a consultant?

It was more an exchange of information rather than training. We didn't say that this is the only and best way to make a film, but it is one of the ways. This was a film exercise that was established four years ago in Poland, and this idea was then exported. I met the directors who are very nice young people. I think that one of them, Vakho Jajanidze, is very promising. Today it's very easy to make a film. So to teach someone how to make a documentary is very time and energy consuming. In our school in Gdynia, more than half of the time is devoted to the art of cinema, and only the remainder to documentaries, which is too little.

›› Anna Dziapshipa

Archives, Memory and Politics

There is no political power without having control over archives and memory. Efficient democracy can always be measured with this essential criterion: access to the archives, the structure of the archives and their interpretation.

Jacques Derrida

Let us start from the very beginning and try to explain that archive is a memory, and that protection of the memory is a political act.

In recent times, the interest of scholars and archival organizations in Georgian film has been expressed in the form of organizing retrospective showings of Georgian films abroad. Although retrospectives for French, Italian or German films do not face big difficulties, this has not been the case for Georgian films. To be precise, due to the lack of high quality copies or the small number of films, the scale of the presentation of Georgian cinema abroad has never been very impressive. This year, the showing of Georgian films in American archives and museums proves that it is achievable through the efforts of large organizations and motivated people even with the problems that still exist. However, one problem remains and its name is not Gosfilmfund nor Russian politics nor lack of finances, but rather indifference to the protection of our national cinematography. We can see this indifference in the deplorable condition of original and non-original copies of the films preserved in Georgia. Vast numbers of film boxes have rusted away, been damaged by water or destroyed by fire. This is due to the indifference of individual people, as well as society and the state.

Over the last few years the situation has started to change to a certain extent. Some organizations have started to take care of their own collections and some organizations have funded a number of restoration projects. For example, this year the Georgian National Archive is completing the equipping of the depository of film tapes with a climate control system, which means that the depots will be provided with a set constant temperature and relative humidity. Climate control has also been ensured in a depository for a small collection of ethnographical films at the Georgian National Museum. There is no such system in other depository organizations as yet.

Cinema is extremely vulnerable due the nature of its material and its preservation demands specific technical conditions. For example, like written documents, the preservation of films demands the relevant climate conditions, and maintenance of the temperature and humidity. The latter requires technical infrastructure in archives and museums.

We must remember that nothing can be kept forever, and that preservation is a continually developing process. After conservation, the most important issue of cultural, academic and political importance is access to the collections. The existence of an audio-visual archive can be politically approved if access to it is ensured. Preservation is necessary to make them accessible to scholars and a wider audience. To achieve this, it is necessary to take care of the originals, make copies of different types, and carry out other procedures requiring both technical infrastructure and hu-

man resources and, most importantly, finance.

Part of this process is the restoration and preservation of films. Restoration means making copies and ensuring their photo-chemical or digital treatment. There have only been a few low-budget projects in Georgia in recent years. Starting in 2007, a number of projects were implemented by the National Film Centre of Georgia and the National Archive of Georgia.

Whereas a few decades ago in Europe and America there were archives where only documents were kept, today every prestigious organization tries to exhibit everything it preserves, for nothing should be hidden away. The time when archivists hid information in their own collections from their colleagues has gone.

However, in order for a visitor to the archive see a film, the archive has to have a copy of the film (made from the negative) that will be kept on an accessible driver which transfers the memory to the audience or scholar.

The moving image is part of the cultural heritage of humankind and the memory of the world. In this collective memory, Georgian documentary and fiction cinematography takes up only a small place. It expresses the cultural identity of the Georgian people and represents a new technological form for the preservation of history which differs from other forms of memory and has specific features. The accumulation of memory and its transmission to new generations or the destruction of memory is one of the core needs of humanity. This is a coin with two sides.

The destruction of an archive might be a purposeful action in wars. For example, we can remember the burning of archives in Abkhazia - an act for which the Georgian and Abkhazian sides blame each other. The case has not yet been investigated. Thus, the criminals have not been found although they could be from either side. Since in this case the burning of the archive was a political act, the moral but not the legal responsibility is on both parties. We can say this because nobody ensured that the archive was evacuated or protected in the war because the history preserved in archives belongs to society.

This question of the approach of society to archive activities is especially crucial in Georgia. Who should look after the archives? Who has the ownership responsibility? However, these questions are not being discussed as society is not interested in the work of archives. And if there is any interest, it is only due to discoveries made in the archives, which is more akin to interest in the detective genre.

For the majority of people, archives are associated with an organization providing some civil papers, such as documents for the baptism or death of an ancestor, etc., which is needed in a person's everyday life.

Society must be made aware of the value of cultural achievements before it is too late. Society's involvement and interest in the work and conditions of archives, and the history preserved in archives, is vital for the efficient functioning of the organizations carrying out the preservation.

Preservation of the past and access to it is a statement of values and principles. Basically, this is a political activity. In the last century, the purposeful destruction of archives shows that there will always be people who will try, for various different motifs, to hide or obscure what is preserved in the archives. Preservation of the past is a mission for the present.

Archivists must protect archive documents from being damaged, censored, or deliberately changed. Selection of the material, preservation and provision of access to the public should be based on objective reasons and declared archival regulations and not political, social, economic or ideological aims, which might be justified by modern views and even political correctness. The past is already over, it is complete and we cannot change it.

In his work- "Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles", the Australian archivist Ray Edmondson, one of the main contributors to the establishment of the audio-visual archive of Australia, writes that "Passion, power and politics are as inseparable from audiovisual archiving as they are from the older collecting disciplines." Passion and desire for the protection of memories as well as passion for their destruction are also inseparable. In 1942 Ruzvelt said "there is no man and no power which can kill memory." But history has showed, especially dramatically over the past hundred years, that the memory can be destroyed and manipulated, that the carriers of memory are tragically vulnerable to both the deliberate and involuntary processes of destruction.

›› Nino Dzandzava